ALL IS FISH THAT COMES TO THE NET:

THE ATLANTIC FISHERIES, CULTURAL CHANGE, AND MODERN ACADIAN IDENTITY IN SOUTHWEST NOVA SCOTIA, 1968-1984

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December 2023

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts.

Ô toi, Baie Sainte-Marie
Tantôt tranquille, tu brilles
Comme des milliers de diamants.
Demain enragée comme l'ouragan.

Donne à nos amis Acadiens
Le fruit précieux comme dans le passé
Pour qu'ils puissent vivre, servir, aimer
Leurs familles, leur communauté
Maintenant c'est le repos
De cette mer autrefois abondante.
Que sera demain ?
Les Acadiens peuvent attendre.
Ils ont beaucoup d'espoir, d'espérance

Et le cœur en or.
Les beaux jours reviendront.
Ainsi soit-il.[1]

— *Sur la mer*
Par Blanche Comeau, 1997

[1] Blanche Comeau, "Sur la mer," in *Sur la mer*, ed. Marie-Adèle Deveau (Saulnierville, Nova Scotia: Le Comité régional de la FANE de Clare, 1997), 49.

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ABSTRACT

Drawing upon wide range of English and French primary sources, this thesis presents a new social history of Clare and Argyle's Acadian fishing communities during the late twentieth century. Specifically, it explores the interplay between the regions' chief economic activity of fishing and the development of a distinct Acadian identity in Southwest Nova Scotia between 1968 and 1984. By analyzing the ways in which Clare and Argyle's minority communities navigated nearly two decades of change — encompassing the militant rise of the Acadian neo-nationalist movement, increased levels of state intervention, and the advancement of modern, liberal, and capitalist cultural practices — this thesis argues that the commercial fishing industry was and has been a critical part of Acadian identity in Southwest Nova Scotia since at least the mid-twentieth century. In doing so, this thesis expands upon the idea that a particular economic sector can play a deciding role in the collective identity of a minority group, representing a novel contribution to the twentieth century historiographical archive of Acadian economic and social life.

RÉSUMÉ

Puisant dans un large éventail de sources primaires en anglais et en français, cette thèse présente une nouvelle histoire sociale des communautés acadiennes de pêche de Clare et d'Argyle au cours de la fin du XXe siècle. Plus précisément, elle explore l'interaction entre l'activité économique principale de la pêche dans les régions et le développement d'une identité acadienne distincte dans le sud-ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse entre 1968 et 1984. En analysant la manière dont les communautés minoritaires de Clare et d'Argyle ont navigué à travers près de deux décennies de changements, englobant l'essor militant du mouvement néo-nationaliste acadien, l'intervention accrue de l'État et l'avancement des pratiques culturelles modernes, libérales et capitalistes, cette thèse soutient que l'industrie de la pêche commerciale a été et demeure une partie essentielle de l'identité acadienne dans le sud-ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse depuis au moins le milieu du XXe siècle. Ce faisant, cette thèse approfondit l'idée qu'un secteur économique particulier peut jouer un rôle décisif dans l'identité collective d'un groupe minoritaire, représentant ainsi une contribution novatrice à l'archive historiographique du XXe siècle sur la vie économique et sociale acadienne.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people, without whom this work would not have been possible. The contributions that all of you folks have made, even small, have meant the world to me as I've navigated this project and my degree.

First and foremost, I extend my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Professor Suzanne Morton for her knowledge, guidance, and ability to push me further. When I first proposed this research, I was looking at around five books worth of material, and Prof. Morton's ability to guide me through the scoping process demonstrated her exceptional skills as an educator and mentor. I sincerely appreciated her ability to both critique and celebrate. Under her guidance, I was able to write confidently and produce a piece of work that I feel truly proud of.

From my time at McGill, I'd like to send a sincere thank you to professors Ed Dunsworth, Elizabeth Elbourne, Noelani Arista, Griet Vankeerberghen, and Wendell Adjetey. All of you made my McGill experience truly exceptional. Your seminar courses pushed me to think about history in new ways, and learning about your research inspired me to be bold with my own. I'd like to extend an extra special thank you to Ava Sharpe, Mallory Novicoff, and Matthew Barreto, who have been incredible friends to me during my time at McGill. I cannot express how much I admire you three, and how excited I am to see you continue to grow. I can't wait to have your books on my shelf someday. I gratefully acknowledge not only the financial, but the personal support of the McCall MacBain Scholarship Foundation for bringing me to McGill and helping me see this project through to the end. The community that the scholarship built for me was invaluable during my year in Montreal, and the connections I made with my mentor, life coach, and advisor furthered my sense of academic curiosity.

From my time as an undergraduate at Dalhousie University, I'd like to thank Professor Will Langford for sparking my interest in this topic and guiding me through my honour's thesis, which surprisingly started out as even more books worth of material than this one. A thanks also goes out to Professors Steve Mannell and Melanie Zurba for teaching me how to prepare and write a thesis — I referred to your folk's guidance from my undergrad more than once in preparing this research. To Professors Todd McCallum and Jannette Vusich, thank you for supporting my application to McGill and showing me what a model educator looks like. And finally, thank you to Professor Johnathan Fowler from Saint Mary's University for answering my email query back in 2020 about

the possibility of writing an honours thesis on the Acadian fisheries. Your initial enthusiasm for my research interest has led me to the place I am today.

Thanks to my best friends Madeleine West, Joseph Lahey, Lex Hutchings, and Katherine Pindera, who guided me through the turmoil of this past year. And a special thanks to my partner Thomas, who was there throughout every aspect of this work, including the most difficult days. My parents, Karen, and Todd, deserve more thanks than I could ever express in this short section. From the first skeleton key I bought at age four, to the magazine on our historic home I wrote in grade seven, their support for my love of history has only grown over time.

I'd like to extend a sincere thank you to Augustin J. Comeau of Meteghan River, Nova Scotia, without whom this research wouldn't have been possible. Augustin was a weekly subscriber to *Le Petit Courrier du Sud-ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse* between 1960 and 1969, and I relied upon his personal copies of the paper whilst researching this period. The handwritten scrawl of Augustin's name greeted me every time I opened an important early copy of *Le Petit Courrier*, a charming reminder of how the most diligent keepers of Acadian history and culture are often individuals.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my grandfather Gilles Gaudet, who would be so proud to see who I've become. A proud Acadian, Gilles gifted me with the love of history from a young age and was the tireless caretaker of our family's culture throughout the years. He had a burning passion for education, and always spoke fondly of the one doctor in our family, a distant relative that became nearly mythologized — as did higher education. Growing up with Gilles as the centre of my Acadian universe has shaped me into the person and scholar I am today, including those hot summer days I spent at the family restaurant in my childhood. While doing research for this project, I stumbled upon a long last ad in *Le Petit Courrier* for our old family business, with a special word of Acadian welcome from Gilles himself (figure 1). This piece of my family history, embedded within my broader field of study, serves as a parting reminder of how I truly did grow up in a family "where history sat at the dinner table."[2] Merci pour tout papa. Tu me manques.

[2] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), xxi.

Figure 1. Advertisement for the Sea and Tide Restaurant in Shad Bay, Nova Scotia. *Le Petit Courrier de la Nouvelle-Écosse* (West Pubnico, NS), Sept. 7, 1972.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMA	Congrès Mondial Acadien
DFO	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
FANE	Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse
FFNE	Fédération Francophone de la Nouvelle-Écosse
FSD	Fisheries Statistical District
LD	Lobster District
LFA	Lobster Fishing Area
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
NSFA	Nova Scotia Fishermen's Association
SANE	Société Acadie Nouvelle-Écosse
SAR	Ste-Anne-du-Ruisseau
SFSA	Scotia Fundy Seiner's Association
SNA	Société Nationale de l'Acadie
UFAWU	United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union
UMFU	United Maritime Fishermen's Union

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Introduction

The Acadians of Southwest Nova Scotia, Neither Fish nor Fowl

Over the course of two weeks in July and August 2004, the Acadian communities of Southwest Nova Scotia welcomed nearly sixty thousand visitors in celebration of the third annual Congrès Mondial Acadien, a landmark event that marked the four-hundredth anniversary of Acadian settlement in Nova Scotia.[3] To prepare for the festivities, the provincial government installed a new set of French-language road signs along the region's major highways, featuring identifiable symbols of Acadianité such as the Acadian national flag, the character of Évangéline, and the region's iconic Église Sainte-Marie.[4] Concurrently, volunteers of the Société Acadie Nouvelle-Écosse (SANE) initiated a year-long media blitz, playing the festival's anthem "Je reviens au berceau de l'Acadie" on loop across local radio stations, and sending nearly 600,000 event flyers to tourism bureaus across North America.[5] In total, two thousand community events were organized across Nova Scotia during the 2004 CMA, including ninety-nine family reunions, 250 musical performances, and one hundred academic presentations.[6] During the height of the festivities, DVDs and CDs featuring Acadian folk artists flew off the shelves, while restaurant owners struggled to pump out enough plates of fricot and râpure.[7] Although these mobilizations of mainstream, recognizable, and easily

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[3] Société Acadie Nouvelle-Écosse (henceforth SANE), *Congrès mondial acadien 2004. Rapport final* (Moncton: Société nationale de l'Acadie, 2004), 14. The 2004 CMA was the third event of its kind. The first was held in Southwest New Brunswick in 1994 and the second in Louisiana in 1999. It was recently announced that the 2024 CMA will take place in the municipalities of Clare and Argyle for the second time in the event's thirty-year history.

[4] Mélanie LeBlanc, "Langue et tourisme culturel en Nouvelle-Écosse : Les retombées d'un congrès mondial Acadien," *Revue de l'Université de Moncton* 48, no. 1 (2017): 162, https://doi.org/10.7202/1043563ar. The Église Sainte-Marie in Church Point, Nova Scotia is a localized symbol of Acadianité (Acadian identity or Acadianness) that has gained near mythical status as the largest wooden church in North America, as well as one of the oldest. See Luc Noppen, "L'Église Sainte-Marie, monument du métissage de modèles bretons et des savoir-faire acadiens," *Port Acadie*, no. 10-12 (2006): 149-175, https://doi-org./10.7202/018637ar.

[5] SANE, *Congrès mondial acadien,* 18. Two hundred and fifty thousand of these flyers were sent to Quebec, 75,000 were sent to Texas and Louisiana, and an estimated 250,000 more were distributed across Atlantic Canada.

[6] SANE, *Congrès mondial acadien,* 5, 8-10. Acadian operators who participated in the CMA reported that their yearly visitation rates increased by an average of 30% in 2004.

[7] SANE, *Congrès mondial acadien,* 17. Fricot and râpure are both traditional Acadian dishes.

operative symbols of Acadianité reflected the SANE's desire to attract a diverse group of participants to Southwest Nova Scotia, some commemorative projects associated with the event were decidedly less performative.

One such example was the publication of a short book titled *The Acadian Fishery in Nova Scotia : 400 Years Proud* by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). Throughout the short and vibrantly coloured text, the Acadians of Southwest Nova Scotia are repeatedly venerated for having made a number of substantial contributions to the province's late twentieth century fishing industry.[8] Certain sections of the book detail the Acadian fisher's plight against cultural assimilation and philosophy of self-governance, while others provide empirical figures on the Southwest Shore's most recent lobster landings and longstanding involvement with the DFO.[9]

When placed within its proper historical context as an intentional act of commemoration, the 2004 publication of *The Acadian Fishery in Nova Scotia* takes on new meaning. At its core, the short, laudatory text provides nuanced insight into how Acadianité was reproduced in daily life on the Southwest Shore; in settings devoid of folkloric costumes, excessive flag waving, and inquisitive journalists documenting the "authenticity" of the people and places around them. It relates the province's distinct Acadian history and "spirit" to the circumstances of everyday life for those who lived and worked in the fisheries of Southwest Nova Scotia. In doing so, the book doesn't exclude or usurp the concept of Acadian cultural authenticity, it honours its ambivalence. Collectively, the 2004 publication of *The Acadian Fishery in Nova Scotia* epitomizes the idea that the economic activities

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[8] The book opens with a personal message from Geoff Regan, Federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans who commends the Acadians for having "turned to the abundance of the sea for their survival and [...] continued to be a major influence in the Nova Scotia fishery — the biggest and most valuable fishery in Canada — to the present day." Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (henceforth DFO), *The Acadian Fishery in Nova Scotia: 400 Years Proud* (Dartmouth, NS: Communications Branch Fisheries and Oceans Canada Maritimes Region, 2004), 2.

[9] For example, the section titled "Acadians in the Modern Fishery" describes the fleet, fisher population, and total landings of each Acadian fishing community in the province. DFO, *The Acadian Fishery*, 7-12. Another titled "Acadians in Fisheries Management" describes how the Acadians continue to "take a prominent part in research and management," and "influence fishery management through their organizations and through government-industry advisory processes." DFO, *The Acadian Fishery,* 11.

of the Acadians in Southwest Nova Scotia were inextricably tied to a unique set of historical, social, cultural, and institutional contexts. Most importantly, however, is the fact that *The Acadian Fishery in Nova Scotia* remains one of the only texts to have done so.

Since the late nineteenth century, the importance of fishing for Acadian communities has remained a subject of considerable academic consideration.[10] Historians have provided diverse perspectives on the ways in which localized processes of Acadian ethnic identity construction, consolidation, and performance are grounded within the distinct socio-economic structuration of fisheries-based communities.[11] However, in this long line of scholarship, nearly every historian has focused on the Acadian fishing communities of New Brunswick, inadvertently relegating the study of Nova Scotia's Acadian fishers to the realm of vernacular historiography. To date, no historians have critically analyzed the interface of Acadian identity and the fisheries in Nova Scotia at a time when both institutions were undergoing their most dramatic transformations — the mid-to-late twentieth century.

Building upon the existent body of literature, this thesis presents a new social history of Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia that explores the unique interplay between economic activity and ethnic identity in the Acadian fishing communities of Clare and Argyle during the late twentieth century; specifically, between 1968 and 1984.[12] Located along the southwestern tip of peninsular

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[10] Historian Nicolas Landry has produced numerous works on this topic, with notable examples being *Éléments d'histoire des pêches: la péninsule acadienne du Nouveau-Brunswick, 1890-1950* (Quebec: Septentrion, 2005); "La Compagnie De La Pêche Sédentaire En Acadie, 1682-1708," *Port Acadie* 22-23 (2012): 9–41, https://doi.org/10.7202/1014975ar; "Acadian Fisheries of Southwest Nova Scotia in the Nineteenth Century," in *Work, Ethnicity, and Oral History,* ed. Dorothy E. Moore and James H. Morrison (Halifax: The Printer, 1988), 55-62.

[11] Relevant examples include Samuel Arsenault, "On est venu, c'est pour rester : Caraquet, the Development of an Acadian Identity" (Ph.D. thesis, Queen's University, 1988); Alyson Blaquière, "Représentations et appartenance identitaire parmi les Acadiens de la Baie-des-Chaleurs, 1763-1867" (master's thesis, Université Laval, 2020); and Patrick Clarke "Pêches et identité en Acadie : nouveaux regards sur la culture et la ruralité en milieu maritime," *Recherches sociographiques* 39, no. 1 (1998): 59-101, https://doi.org/10.7202/057186ar.

[12] According to Acadian historian Michael Poplyansky, "The years between 1968 and 1982 represent [...] the heyday of Acadian neo-nationalism." See "The Rootedness of Acadian Neo-nationalism: The Changing Meaning of le 15 août, 1968-1982," in *Celebrating Canada: Holidays, National Days, and the Crafting of Identities*, ed. Raymond B. Blake and Mathew Hayday (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 383. Additionally, according to maritime sociologist Richard Apostle, "The mid 1980s were also when Nova Scotia emerged as Canada's largest fish producing province." See

Nova Scotia, the networked, rural, and largely Acadian municipalities of Clare and Argyle have a unique regional history that is strongly tied to the commercial fishing industry, justifying their selection as the central case studies for this thesis. The sea and its resources have been foundational to Acadian daily life in the region since the early eighteenth century, serving as a communal resource for capital accumulation, social identification, and artistic inspiration. From the rise of West Pubnico's "flotte Acadien" during the 1880s to the establishment of Comeau Sea Foods Ltd. in 1946, the Acadians of Clare and Argyle have played a determining role in the overall prosperity of Nova Scotia's commercial fishing industry.[13] By the mid twentieth century, the Acadian sense of place in Clare and Argyle was inextricably tied to the sea, exemplified by the thematic works of local filmmakers, authors, and playwrights, local cultural festivals titled "L'Unité par la mer," and the patriotic shades of yellow, red, and blue boat paint used to decorate family dwellings.[14]

However, there is not some sense of timeless centrality when it comes to commercial fishing and Acadian identity in Southwest Nova Scotia. In fact, many leaders of the Acadian nationalist movement viewed fishing as counterproductive to Acadian unity and prosperity during the early twentieth century, serving as a seasonal, subsistence economy in Clare and Argyle prior to the Second World War.[15] The strong association between Southwest Nova Scotia's unique brand of Acadianité and the fisheries ought to be viewed as somewhat of an invented tradition, and this thesis

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Community, State, and Market of the North Atlantic Rim: Challenges to Modernity in the Fisheries (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 254.

[13] Landry, "Acadian Fisheries of Southwest Nova Scotia," 59; DFO, *The Acadian Fishery,* 11; Clarke, "Pêches et identité en Acadie," 64.

[14] Local filmmaker Phil Comeau of Saulnierville produced several works focused on the local fishery, see *J'avions 375 ans* for a particularly poignant example. Playwright and author Germaine Comeau of Meteghan has a similar oeuvre, see *Les Pêcheurs Déportées*. For more on local sea-based festivals, see pages 13-47 of *Le Courrier*'s special issue on le Festival Acadien de Clare "L'Unité par la mer" published July 4, 1984. In a 1980 article for *Vancouver Sun*, journalist William Davis documents "The polychromatic houses across the French shore coloured in yellow, red, and blue along with exotic but equally loud colors like raspberry and cobalt.... community members explain that fishermen use the same paint on their boats as their houses, marine paint is usually bright to make vessels visible in bad weather." William Davis, "Acadians kept culture for 375 years of struggle," *Vancouver Sun*, August 29, 1980, 18.

[15] Clarke, "Pêches et identité en Acadie," 77-78; Landry, "Acadian Fisheries of Southwest Nova Scotia," 59. The negative discourse surrounding fishing and the positive discourse surrounding farming during the Acadian nationalist movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is discussed further in Chapter One.

argues that the emergence of this tradition can be correlated to a specific set of social, economic, and cultural changes that occurred in Southwest Nova Scotia and abroad during the mid-to-late twentieth century. Specifically, this thesis narrows in on the circumstances of everyday life for the Acadian fishing communities of Clare and Argyle between 1968 and 1984 to explore how the commercial fisheries became so closely tied to localized Acadian identity. This sixteen-year period marks the precise moment in time when the region's small minority community faced the greatest threats to date to its cultural and linguistic survival yet was engaged in a highly successful commercial fishery that made it richer than ever before.

The late 1960s through to the mid 1980s was a dynamic period of political upheaval and cultural entropy for the Acadians of Canada's Maritime provinces. Several large-scale socio-economic transformations of the post-war period — notably the expansion of the Canadian welfare state, increased levels of state intervention, and widespread suburbanization, modernization, and globalization — brought new challenges to the region's peripheral and largely rural Acadian population. As an ever-evolving set of economic and political circumstances continued to heighten the integration of Acadian communities into the North American market economy, the Acadians struggled to maintain their traditional, cultural, regional, and economic specificity as ethnolinguistic minorities. It was at this time that a new group of ideologues — now known as the Acadian neo-nationalists — began to gradually step onto the political scene; campaigning for legislative reforms, historiographical revisions, and behavioral modifications that reconceptualized the very foundations of Acadian cultural identity.[16] For many neo-nationalists, it was at this time that the term "Acadie" became a synecdoche for New Brunswick, a province that proved to be particularly fertile ground

[16] Jean-Paul Hautecoeur, "Nationalisme et développement en Acadie," *Recherches sociographiques* 17, no. 2 (1976): 167–172, doi: 10.7202/055713ar; Joel Belliveau, "Acadian New Brunswick's Ambivalent Leap into the Canadian Liberal Order," in *Creating Postwar Canada: Community, Diversity, and Dissent, 1945-1975,* ed. Robert Rutherdale and Magda Fahrni (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 65-66, 73-76, 78-79.

for neo-nationalist organization. The Acadians constituted approximately 37% of New Brunswick's total population in 1971, a factor that strongly abetted the collective's ability to secure new ethno-linguistic protections and political representation throughout the 1960s.[17] Neo-nationalist organizers even formed their own political party in 1972 — the Parti Acadien (PA) — whose initially reformist, nationalist, and socialist platform became increasingly predicated upon the creation of an autonomous Acadian province during New Brunswick's 1978 provincial election.[18]

Just a stone's throw across New Brunswick's southern border, the Acadians of Nova Scotia were experiencing an entirely different set of historical circumstances as an ethno-cultural collective. Even the province's largest Acadian communities found themselves unable to achieve the same political gains as their northern neighbours, encumbered by their fragmented geography and populace that stretched from northern Cape Breton to Argyle in the extreme southwest; collectively constituting a mere 10.2% of the province's total population in 1971.[19] Despite their attempts to self-organize (as chiefly illustrated by the founding of the Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, or FANE, in 1968), the Acadians of Nova Scotia were largely viewed as a hopeless people during the neo-nationalists era — a people whose vibrancy could not prevent their inevitable cultural and linguistic demise.[20] In the words of Daniel Deveau, an Acadian neo-nationalist and professor of linguistics at the Université de Moncton, "À chaque sursaut de fierté acadienne dans

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[17] Dollard Landry, "Les circonstances économiques des provinces maritimes et des régions acadiennes," *Revue de l'Université Sainte-Anne,* (1977): 39; Belliveau, "New Brunswick's Ambivalent Leap," 75; Michael Poplyansky, "The Rootedness of Acadian Neo-nationalism: The Changing Meaning of le 15 août, 1968-1982," in *Celebrating Canada: Holidays, National Days, and the Crafting of Identities*, ed. Raymond Blake and Mathew Hayday (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 383.

[18] Monique Gauvin and Lizette Jalbert, "The Rise and Fall of the Parti Acadien," *Canadian Parliamentary Review* 10, no. 3 (1987): 15, http://www.revparl.ca/10/3/10n3_87e_Gauvin.pdf. Running on a separatist platform, the PA managed to secure an impressive 12% of the total vote in the 1978 election.

[19] Landry, "Les circonstances économiques," 39. These factors are discussed further in Chapter One.

[20] The FANE (known as the Fédération francophone de la Nouvelle-Écosse or FFNE prior to 1972), was founded in 1968 "pour défendre explicitement les intérêts économiques, culturels, sociaux et politiques de la communauté ethnolinguistique francophone ou acadienne." Michael Poplyansky, "Au carrefour de deux Acadies : l'impact du Parti acadien sur les orientations de la Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, 1977-1982," in *Saisir Le Présent, Penser L'avenir : Réflexions Sur L'acadie Contemporaine*, ed. Julien Massicotte (Quebec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2021), 84.

cette province, on est en droit de se demander: est-ce là le chant du coq qui annonce un nouveau matin ou celui du cygne qui précède la paralysie définitive?"

As the Acadians of Southwest Nova Scotia were further pushed to the margins of their ethnic community's neo-nationalist project, closer to home they found themselves increasingly involved in one of the province's most valuable and diverse fisheries.[21] The average income of the Southwest region's fishers was "considerably above" the provincial median in 1982, and residents of historically poor Acadian communities such as West Pubnico reported higher annual incomes than that of their anglophone neighbours.[22] According to historian Sue Calhoun, the fishers of Southwest Nova Scotia — many of whom were Acadian — were even nicknamed the "Cadillac fisherman" during the late 1970s, as "even deck hands on scallop draggers were making so much money that [they] began to buy red Cadillacs."[23]

Compellingly, the threat of cultural extinction and the promise of economic prosperity came together at the exact same time for the Acadians of Clare and Argyle, and that moment in time is the focus of this thesis. Reflexively, one might assume that the latter factor would accelerate the former; that economic prosperity would accelerate the adoption of "modern," liberal, capitalist values and cultural practices in the region. In fact — as this thesis argues — the opposite occurred. The

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[21] Sue Calhoun, *A Word to Say: The Story of the Maritime Fishermen's Union* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1991), 84. Between 1969 and 1973, approximately 25% of Canada's average annual lobster landings came from the western portion of Lobster District 4 (Burn's Point to Baccaro). The region also accounted for 33% of the Canadian lobster fishery's total landed value for 1973. See Appendix A: Statistics, Table 1: Lobster landings, number of traps, 1969-73, in Canada, Fisheries and Marine Service, Lobster Fishery Task Force, *Lobster Fishery Task Force: Final Report, March 1975* (Ottawa: Lobster Fishery Task Force, 1975), 124, https://science-catalogue.canada.ca/record=40628 13~S6. Additionally, the scallop fishery of Southwest Nova Scotia enjoyed "the highest profits and incomes in the fishing industry in the 1970s and 1980s." Richard Apostle and Gene Barrett, *Emptying Their Nets: Small Capital and Rural Industrialization in the Nova Scotia Fishing Industry* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 77. *Note:* The spatial difference between "Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia" and the fisheries of "Southwest Nova Scotia" is discussed further in Chapter One.

[22] Janice Raymond, *Scotia-Fundy Region Fishing Community Profiles* (Halifax: Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Scotia-Fundy Region, Economics Branch, 1985), 176-384. The greater Southwest region was home to the highest average household incomes for fulltime fishers in 1982. See Canada, Task Force on Atlantic Fisheries, and Michael J. Kirby, *Navigating Troubled Waters: A New Policy for the Atlantic Fisheries : Report of the Task Force on Atlantic Fisheries* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1982), 65.

[23] Calhoun, *A Word to Say,* 216.

commercial fishing industry emerged as a critical part of Southwest Nova Scotian Acadian identity during the late twentieth century; a new regionally specific assertion of Acadianité that was grounded in the specific, local, everyday circumstances of Clare and Argyle's Acadian population as opposed to just national history, ethnicity, language, and ancestry. Importantly, this phenomenon did not emerge from any sort of "anti-modernist" sentiment or culture among local Acadian nationalists, as historian Ian McKay has argued happened elsewhere in the province during the mid-twentieth century.[24] Instead, the Acadians of Southwest Nova Scotia embraced "modern" elements of their life and began to historicize them as "traditional." In this sense, this thesis demonstrates how a "modern" industry proved critical to maintaining the region's "traditional" culture and practices. To do so, it approaches the contemporary Acadian fishing effort from two angles, examining both the economic and social structures it imposed, as well as the culture and mentality that resulted from it. Through this process, this thesis demonstrates how the Acadians of Southwest Nova Scotia were able to translate their traditional, commonsensical culture into authenticated, modern Acadianité in ways which both challenged and complemented popular neo-nationalist discourse and drew upon the social, cultural, and economic embeddedness of the local commercial fishing industry. Ultimately, this thesis argues that the very cultural survival of Clare and Argyle's self-consciously Acadian communities was due in significant measure to the success of the local commercial fishery.

[24] See Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Anti-Modernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 30-32.

Historiography

Collectively, the Acadians of peninsular Nova Scotia have received negligible attention from historians, especially their twentieth century history.[25] This claim is comparative, as the existent body of literature concerning the Acadians of New Brunswick is far more exhaustive and critical.[26] Despite the sustained dynamism in the field of Acadian history during the past few decades, scholarly explorations of Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia's unique social, cultural, and economic history remain relatively rare. This section aims to address this gap by surveying and evaluating how various authors have approached, debated, and contextualized the people, places, and themes that are central to this thesis. In doing so, the necessity and originality of this research becomes clear, as it fills several historiographical gaps, provides new insight into the Acadian's participation in the commercial fisheries of Southwest Nova Scotia, and broadens popular understandings of the Acadian neo-nationalist period.

To begin with the people and the place, it is useful to first look at the region's extensive archive of vernacular and "non-professional" Acadian history.[27] Since the 1960s, local historians, genealogists, and folklorists from Southwest Nova Scotia have produced intimate portraits of daily life among the region's Acadian population. Clarence d'Entremont, a revered Acadian historian, genealogist, and secular priest from West Pubnico, is a particularly authoritative author within this

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[25] In fact, post-colonial Acadian history is rarely (if ever) referenced within Canada's twentieth century national historiography. See Jacques Paul Couturier, "L'Acadie, c'est un détail": Les représentations de l'Acadie dans le récit national canadien," *Acadiensis* 29, no. 2 (2000): 102-119, https://www.jstor.org/stable/30303270.

[26] It is worth noting here that the Acadians of Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton Island (Nova Scotia) also constitute understudied groups within Acadian and Maritime historiography. For further discussion on the absence of the Acadians within Maritime historiography, see Patrick Clarke, "L'Acadie perdue; Or, Maritime History's Other," *Acadiensis* 30, no. 1 (2000): 73-91, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30303201.

[27] There were very few "professional" (i.e., academically trained) Acadian historians working prior to the foundation of the Université de Moncton in 1963. As such, the discipline of Acadian history was "professionalized" noticeably later than that of French-Canadian history or Maritime history, both of which adopted greater standards of academic rigour and research methodology in the period which broached the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. See Julien Massicotte, "Histoire et pertinence : notes sur l'historiographie acadienne récente," in *Faire son temps. Usages publics du passé dans les francophonies nord-américaines*, ed. Martin Pâquet and Serge Dupuis (Quebec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2018), 31.

genre. Throughout the mid-to-late twentieth century, d'Entremont published several important works on the region's history such as *Yarmouth, 350 Years Ago* (1967), *Histoire de Wedgeport, Nouvelle-Écosse* (1967), *Brève histoire de Pubnico* (1984), and *Histoire de Sainte-Anne-du-Ruisseau, Belleville, Rivière-Abram (Nouvelle-Écosse)* (1995).[28] As a historian, d'Entremont treats his historical subjects with an abundance of care and respect, often foregrounding the fervent affection he holds for the Acadians and their centuries long plight against ethnolinguistic assimilation. A consistent theme or "key take away" across his extensive historiographical oeuvre is that Nova Scotia's seafaring Acadians were a particularly fortuitous group, maintaining their historically distinct culture, language, and identity well into the early twentieth century. This thesis builds upon the work of d'Entremont by subjugating his theory of Acadian development on the Southwest Shore to the test of time, exploring how historical dynamics of cultural (dis)empowerment associated with the community-based occupation of fishing faltered, endured, or modulated during the late twentieth century.

Alain Doucet, an Acadian folklorist from Petit-Ruisseau takes a markedly more ethnological approach to historicizing Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia in his 1961 book *La littérature orale de la Baie Sainte-Marie.* In this solitary publication, Doucet encyclopedically recounts the folktales, superstitions, songs, and legends that have been transmitted from hushed lips to cupped ears across the parish halls, schoolhouses, fishing fleets, and local taverns of Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia since the mid eighteenth century. As the first community "insider" to survey the region's folklore, Doucet expresses his overt desire to produce an alternative reading of the region's Acadian history, stating that empirical, narrative-based studies represent only a "travail de surface," contending that

[28] Other notable examples from d'Entremont's extensive historical oeuvre include *The Acadians and their Genealogy* (Self-published, 1975); *Petit manuel d'histoire d'Acadie des débuts à 1976* (Moncton: Librairie acadienne, Université de Moncton, 1976); *Histoire du Cap-Sable: de l'an mil au Traité de Paris (*Eunice, LA: Hébert Publications, 1981); and *Histoire de Quinan, Nouvelle-Écosse* (Yarmouth, NS: Lescarbot, 1984).

"la littérature orale vient suppléer aux carences de l'histoire."[29] Decidedly, Deveau accomplishes this goal over the course of the book's fourteen chapters, effectively nuancing the region's Acadian history as delineated by d'Entremont and shedding new light on the relationship between individually held metaphysical beliefs and the collective structure of community life. Deveau's exceptional analytical prowess is most perceptible during his discussion on the folk culture of Acadian fishers, which spans several chapters and encompasses detailed annotations of their folk songs, a morphological analysis of their unique vocabulary, and a historically grounded analysis of their obscure superstitious beliefs — such as wearing grey mittens, carrying black suitcases, or placing slices of bread face-down while aboard fishing vessels.[30] In its entirety, Doucet's book represents an invaluable contribution to the limited historical archive on Acadian cultural specificity in Southwest Nova Scotia, demonstrating how the Acadians' religious beliefs, forms of social regulations, customs, leisure, and kinship structures were continually coming in contact with the conditions of their work as fishers.

During the late 1970s, Alphonse Deveau, an Acadian historian and long-time resident of Salmon River, emerged as d'Entremont and Doucet's key successor, adopting a comparable tone and scope yet applying his own empirically based methodology. In fact, Deveau has even stated that several of his most popular books were written in homage to the pioneering work of d'Entremont and Doucet, whose personal archives he heavily consulted in preparation of *Along the Shores of Saint Mary's Bay: The Story of a Unique Community* (1977), *Notre héritage acadien* (1979), and *Clare ou la ville française* (1983).[31] Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Deveau made several significant contributions to

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[29] Alain Doucet, *La littérature orale de la Baie Sainte-Marie* (Quebec: Editions Ferland, 1965), 7. For a more detailed overview of Doucet's methodology, see Carmen d'Entremont, "Alain Doucet : en quête des traditions orales de la Baie Sainte-Marie," *Rabaska* 19, (2021) : 185–203, https://doi.org/10.7202/1082747ar.
[30] Doucet, *La littérature orale,* 32, 88.
[31] Alphonse Deveau, *Clare ou la ville française* (Pointe-de-l'Église: Imprimerie de Université Sainte-Anne, 1983), 9; d'Entremont, "Alain Doucet," 189.

the region's existent historiographical archive, producing rich historical texts which both introduced new primary sources and offered a fresh perspective on previously used material. For example, in *Clare ou la ville française* Deveau draws upon Doucet's archival material (including folklore) yet manages to paint a particularly empirical and industrious picture of early twentieth century shipbuilding in Clare, including numerous figures, footnotes, and photographs.[32]

Deveau's authority and diligence as an Acadian historian is further demonstrated by his 1992 co-authorship of the first "mainstream" historical study devoted entirely to the history of Nova Scotian Acadians, titled *The Acadians of Nova Scotia Past and Present.* In the book's introduction, Deveau and his co-author Sally Ross make two key observations about Acadian historiography, identifying the "tendency among writers to assume that the real Acadian experience of the last two hundred years has been lived in New Brunswick," and critiquing the propensity of historians to pose "the increasingly successful re-empowerment of New Brunswick Acadians in political and economic life as eclipsing in importance the efforts that have been made in Nova Scotia."[33] To challenge these historiographical conventions, the authors ardently and skillfully establish several connections between the historical circumstances of Nova Scotia's Acadian communities and their presently observable environmental, cultural, and socio-economic features. In doing so, they demonstrate their shared assumption that modern and regionally contingent expressions of Acadianité in Nova Scotia ought to be understood through the lens of each communities' unique history and geography.[34] In the book's final chapter, Ross and Deveau definitively showcase their impressive historical research skills by drawing upon a diverse body of primary source material, including material culture, newspapers articles, government reports, manuscript documents, and census data to delineate the various "challenges of heroic proportions" the Acadians of Nova Scotia have faced

[32] Deveau, *Clare ou la ville française*, 100-110.
[33] Sally Ross and Alphonse Deveau, *The Acadians of Nova Scotia Past and Present* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1992), v.
[34] Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians of Nova Scotia,* viii.

since the 1960s.[35] However, the immense variety of source material employed by Ross and Deveau often hinders their ability to synthesize information and produce solid arguments. For example, the authors argue that by the late 1970s, "integration into the dominant culture of the workplace was…an economic necessity for all Acadians," but provide no insight into the nuances of this statement.[36] Although a handful of statistics on unemployment rates and poverty within Acadian municipalities follow this declaration, these figures are not properly contextualized and the meaning of "dominant culture" is never fully parsed out. Consequently, this portion of their analysis only marginally engages with globalized drivers of regional disparity and cultural assimilation in twentieth century Nova Scotia, leaving the reader with a relatively somber image of Acadian progress. While Ross and Deveau initially expressed the desire to avoid positioning the Acadians of Nova Scotia as a mere statistical control or analytical foil to the re-empowerment of New Brunswick's Acadian population, their analysis indirectly perpetuates this narrative by virtue of several unfortunate analytical omissions.

To briefly summarize, as valuable as the work of Deveau may be, it collectively lacks the intimate, personal details of community life found within the writings of Doucet and d'Entremont. Doucet's study on folklore manages to capture not only the history of the Acadians in Southwest Nova Scotia, but also their memories, imaginations, and trepidations, bridging the gap between the conditions of their work and the unique character of their insular communities. Similarly, the work of d'Entremont spotlights closed-door conversations, hand-shake agreements, and family feuds, as well as the impact of these community episodes on household geographies and popular forms of social regulation. By reducing the immediate scale of observation and assigning value to the analogous, infinitesimal, and somewhat meddlesome components of daily life in Acadian Southwest

[35] Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians of Nova Scotia,* ix.
[36] Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians of Nova Scotia,* 169.

Nova Scotia, d'Entremont and Doucet manage to capture the behaviours, motivations, and aspirations of individuals and communities, as well as their relationship to localized patterns of historical change. Comparatively, the writing of Deveau provides markedly less insight into the everyday circumstances of the Acadians as historical subjects, focusing instead on the larger structural positions they occupied, often without a consideration for the "causes of the causes" which defined their structural positioning as historical actors in the first place.

Moving into the 1990s and 2000s, popular Acadian historians began to abandon the discipline's longstanding analytical constructs and epistemologies associated with writing "national" or "official" Acadian history, placing a newfound emphasis on materialism and revisiting Acadian cultural, economic, and social history.[37] This new historiographical paradigm yielded several important studies on two key themes of this thesis — the Acadian neo-nationalist movement and the Acadian's twentieth century involvement in the Atlantic fisheries. To briefly touch upon the former, most historians writing since the mid 1980s have made some attempt to fit the Acadian neo-nationalist movement into the larger puzzle of twentieth century Canadian history, as opposed to relating it back to the Acadian Renaissance or "traditional Acadian nationalist movement" of the 1880s.[38] This historiographical paradigm revises the disjointed analyses put forth by previous scholars of Acadian nationalism, allowing the collective's history to exist in dialectical tension, both resisted and embraced by nationalists at the same time. The ambivalence of Acadian neo-nationalism has been a subject of interest for several Acadian historians in recent years, resulting in numerous studies on how this entropic episode of Acadian history ought to be read, written about, and reflected upon. For example, Joel Belliveau's 2014 book *Le Moment 68 et la réinvention de l'Acadie,* recontextualizes the role of Acadian university students in kick-starting the neo-nationalist

[37] Julien Massicotte, "Les Nouveaux Historiens de l'Acadie," *Acadiensis* 34, no. 2 (2005): 151, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30303314.
[38] For more on the first wave of Acadian neo-nationalism, see pages 40-41.

movement, arguing that their activism was primarily influenced by a global rise in student organization and protest during the 1960s. By narrowing in on the ideological and generational divisions between the Acadian elite and the Acadian youth during the neo-nationalist period, Belliveau's analysis considers local, national, and global forces simultaneously, and explores the hierarchical salience of the Acadian student's social identities. Of the same token, Julien Massicotte and Philippe Volpé look across multiple scales of historical change in their 2019 book *Au Temps de la Révolution Acadienne: Les Marxistes-Léninistes en Acadie,* posing the spread of Marxism during the mid-to-late twentieth century as a key driver of anti-establishment mobilizations at Acadian universities and francophone workplaces.[39] Both of these texts take a transnational approach to defining Acadian neo-nationalist ideology and practice, yet still focus on a particular setting, group, and period. Belliveau, Massicotte, and Volpé attentively delineate the specific capacities, circumstances, and positioning of their historical actors, pointing out areas of tension and agreement between student/worker mobilizations of Acadian neo-nationalist ideology and the movement's popular understanding. As such, they produce analyses that frame the neo-nationalist movement as a collective questioning of how the Acadians were perceived by others (and perceived themselves) during the last few decades of the twentieth century, adding further nuance to this extremely complex and variable moment in Acadian history. This thesis takes a similar approach, moving across multiple scales and spheres of influence at once, and framing the attitude and logic of Acadian neo-nationalism as having permeated daily life, social regulation, and political efficacy on the Southwest Shore even if its specific ideologies, intended purposes, or political messaging did not.

Lastly, this thesis builds upon the work of historian Nicholas Landry, who has published a number of books and articles on the Acadian fisheries, including *Éléments d'histoire des pêches: la*

[39] Julien Massicotte and Philippe Volpé, *Au Temps de la Révolution Acadienne: Les Marxistes-Léninistes en Acadie* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2019), 6.

péninsule acadienne du Nouveau-Brunswick, 1890-1950 (2005) and *Une communaute acadienne en emergence : Caraquet (New Brunswick) 1760-1860* (2009).[40] Despite the fact that the majority of Landry's work focuses on the Acadians of New Brunswick, his framing, methodology, and approach influence this thesis. Two key themes across Landry's historiographical oeuvre are that national and international contexts help explain the localized rise of Acadian affluence in the fisheries, and that this affluence was often accompanied by an implicit tension between local and outside forces. For example, in *Éléments d'histoire des pêches*, Landry paints the Acadian fishers of Northeast New Brunswick as a politically minded group who were especially adept at advancing their own interests through the Canadian Parliamentary system, despite their second-class treatment as French Canadians.[41] Nevertheless, Landry only narrowly considers Acadian identity in his book, only alluding to the omnipresence of an Acadian elite without any further ethnohistorical explanation of the group and their localized influence. This issue also appears in his short text "Acadian Fisheries of Southwest Nova Scotia in the Nineteenth Century" (1988), which notes that three Acadian families (the d'Entremonts the d'Éons and the Amiros) maintained a strong regional monopoly over the fisheries of the Pubnicos yet omits any discussion on the history of these families, the unique spatial layout of their communities, or even the kinship based, patriarchal structure of fishing societies.[42]

For the purposes of this research, however, the most influential historian of the Acadian fisheries is decidedly Patrick Clarke. Specifically, Clarke's 1998 article "Pêches et identité en Acadie : nouveaux regards sur la culture et la ruralité en milieu maritime" serves as the point of departure for this thesis. In his article, Clarke documents the relationship between Acadian identity, folk culture, and the fisheries across Northeast New Brunswick and Southwest Nova Scotia. He argues that "les

[40] See also Nicolas Landry, "Histoires de pêche," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 46, no 2 (1992): 273–284, https://doi.org/10.7202/305058ar.
[41] Landry, *Éléments d'histoire des pêches*, 78-85.
[42] Landry, "Acadian Fisheries of Southwest Nova Scotia," 59.

pêches auraient agi comme facteur opératoire dans la formation des structures sociales et mentales qui façonnèrent les communautés et les identités," but also looks at the other side of the coin, stating "la structure économique… établit une structure sociale particulière, d'où émergent des modèles culturels distinct qui, à leur tour, modifient la structure économique en engendrent des identités particulières."[43] Reciprocally, Clarke contends that the fisheries altered Acadian identity *and* that Acadian culture altered the structure of the fisheries, thus adopting a more meta-economical lens to analyzing the localized and imbued nature of the industry. Clarke's focus, however, remains tied to the idea that community involvement in the fisheries primarily had "l'effet de reconduire l'essentiel du régime socio-économique et de signification de l'Acadie ancienne."[44] As such, his analysis reproduces the idea of a hinterland/heartland binary in Acadie, suggesting that the Acadian's social identification as "fishers" was grounded in an attempt to resist modernity instead of embracing or negotiating its presence in rural communities. This thesis seeks to further the arguments put forth by Clarke and explore how dynamics of economic and cultural change influenced and impinged upon each other during a particular period and in a particular region, across multiple scales.

In sum, while the existent body of scholarship on the Acadians of Southwest Nova Scotia provides a satisfactory overview of localized Acadian history, culture, and identity during the late twentieth century, these isolated cultural histories often fail to interrogate the implicit and explicit contributions of the Acadians to concurrent ideological, political, and economic debates of their province, country, and ethno-cultural collective. In other words, the most notable deficiency of the region's historiography is a tendency among authors to relegate the Acadians of Nova Scotia to a single social stratum and discuss only their position in such, not the historical conditions which

[43] Clarke, "Pêches et identité en Acadie," 60.
[44] Clarke, "Pêches et identité en Acadie," 69.

defined their positioning. There is a lack of subjectivity assigned to the Acadians in these texts, and the historical particulars that defined their existence and understanding as actors and agents is not compared across multiple scales. How did the large number of Acadian fishers in Southwest Nova Scotia impact the industry's management at a national level? How did the Acadians implicitly and explicitly participate in the political and economic systems around them, which dictated their existence and the existence of others by way of differentiation? These questions remain unanswered.

In building upon the work of d'Entremont, Deveau, Belliveau, Landry, and Clarke, this thesis weaves together the threads of global, regional, and local community change in Southwest Nova Scotia during the late twentieth century. To do so, it is grounded within the rich body of literature on the Acadian neo-nationalist movement and the Atlantic fisheries, two historiographical themes which have traditionally afforded greater sophistication, variation, and agency to the Acadians as historical subjects. Accordingly, this thesis represents both the first social history of the Acadian fisheries in Southwest Nova Scotia and a valuable contribution to the existent historiographical archive on the Acadian neo-nationalist movement.

Source Material and Methodology

To produce a truly nuanced and interdisciplinary analysis, a diverse body of primary source material was consulted for this project, including newspapers, journal articles, census data, and manuscript documents from various government and non-government organizations. The majority of the sources used for this research were written in French, although English sources were occasionally consulted and integrated. Twentieth century Acadian newspapers proved to be a particularly useful primary source for this project, offering first-hand accounts of cultural and economic change as recorded by those closest to them. Acadian historians have long posited

newspapers as one of the most influential institutions found within the "ethnic apparatus" of Acadian identity creation, representing a valuable "archive of day-to-day life."[45] As historian Stephen Vella explains, newspapers reveal more than what events, individuals, or debates contemporary readers were aware of, but also "document the ways in which reporters and editors thought about their own society and the world around them, how they organized and presented information, filtered out or neglected other potential news reports, created influential categories of thought and established, enforced or eroded conventional social hierarchies and assumptions."[46] Accordingly, Valla argues that newspapers are not "neutral conduits of information, but rather gatekeepers and filterers of ideas."[47] This sort of negotiation process between what to omit, what to highlight, what issues to return to week after week is exactly the line of inquiry this analysis takes, justifying the use of local newspapers in this thesis.

To maintain a sharp regional focus, the Acadian newspaper *Le Petit Courrier du Sud-ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse* (henceforth *Le Courrier*) was extensively analyzed in preparation of this thesis. *Le Courrier* was an invaluable primary source for this project, offering an unparalleled account of the contemporary issues, interests, and accomplishments of Nova Scotia's dispersed and diverse Acadian population.[48] To date, *Le Courrier* has yet to be mentioned — let alone critically examined — by historians of the Acadian neo-nationalist movement, nor by historians of Nova Scotia's

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[45] Marc Johnson, "Les stratégies de l'acadianité: analyse socio-historique du rôle de la presse dans la formation de l'identité acadienne" (PhD dissertation, Université de Bordeaux II, 1991), 1. Acadian historians, particularly those dealing with Acadian (neo)nationalism, have repeatedly analyzed the influence of the Acadian press over the collective's twentieth century advancement. See Daigle, "Le nationalisme acadien"; Jules Léger, "*L'Évangéline* de 1960 a 1978: une étude idéologique, problèmes de méthodologie," *Les cahiers de la société historique acadienne* 9, no. 4 (1978): 82-91, https://societehistoriqueacadienne.files.wordpress.com/2018/04/0904_total.pdf; Julien Massicotte and Philippe Volpé, "L'Acayen: idéologies et société en Acadie des années 1970," *Revue de l'Université de Moncton* 50, no. 1-2 (2019): 87–121, https://doi/10.7202/1084312ar.

[46] Stephen Vella, "Newspapers," in *Reading Primary Sources: The Interpretation of Texts from Nineteenth and Twentieth Century History*, ed. Miriam Dobson and Benjamin Ziemann (London: Routledge, 2009), 217.

[47] Vella, "Newspapers," 218.

[48] "Nova Scotia Historical Newspapers: *Le Courrier de la Nouvelle-Écosse*," Nova Scotia Archives, last modified May 2023, https://archives.novascotia.ca/newspapers/results/?nTitle=Courrier.

commercial fisheries. The decision to use *Le Courrier* as the primary source base for this research thus further supports the overall historical exploration and innovation of this thesis project.

In its early days, *Le Courrier* is best described as a modest publication, especially when compared to its New Brunswick counterpart *L'Évangéline*. Throughout the 1960s, weekly editions of *Le Courrier* usually spanned a mere eight and twelve pages and measured only twenty-two by twenty-eight centimeters in size. The paper's divisional headings were usually town names as opposed to catchy headlines, with a sea of birth, death, and marriage notices claustrophobically listed below them. Minor league softball championships, elementary school plays, and the birth of twins were regularly elevated to front-page news. Rarely did an article take up an entire page, apart from the historical vignettes of Père Clarence d'Entremont, religious sermons by local priests, and reprinted articles from *L'Évangéline*. Advertisements were infrequent and almost entirely local, while photographs were especially rare — only the most remarkable individuals got to see their photo in print. However, *Le Courrier* adopted a notably more autonomous voice in 1972 after it was purchased by Lescarbot Ltd., a local print company founded by the FANE.[49] It was at this time that feature stories, large photographs, and detailed advertisements became commonplace. By the mid 1970s, *Le Courrier* had nearly doubled in length, often spanning around twenty to thirty pages, including television guides, movie reviews, horoscopes, opinion pieces, poems, and even French word puzzles. In other words, apart from simply documenting localized dynamics of change, *Le Courrier* itself serves as a living testament to the impacts modernity had on the Southwest Shore's most valuable Acadian institutions during the late twentieth century. As I combed through nearly a thousand editions of *Le Courrier* published between 1968 and 1984, I took note of how authoritative individuals and institutions writing for the paper discursively classified, evaluated, and debated

[49] Gérard Beaulieu, "Media in Acadia," in *Acadia of the Maritimes: Thematic Studies from the Beginning to the Present*, ed. Jean Daigle (Moncton: Chaire d'études acadiennes, 1995), 507, 514.

structural changes to fisheries management in Southwest Nova Scotia. I considered whether these articles were descriptive (i.e., summaries of annual provincial landings) or prescriptive (i.e., editorials, opinion pieces), as well as their placement and frequency within the paper.

In terms of theoretical orientation, this research integrates the sociological perspectives of social identity and community embeddedness, two concepts often used to study the socio-cultural dimensions of decision making in rural fishing communities. Social identity theory provides an appropriate framework for understanding how individual identities dictate group belonging based on shared attributes such as ethnicity, culture, occupation, or place of residence.[50] As further explained by Ryan Kelty and Ruth Kelty:

> Identity theory contends that individuals have multiple role identities: one for each role they occupy. A person may identify as a parent, friend, teacher, salesperson, and any number of other roles—including fisher. To make sense of their multiple identities, people order them hierarchically based on the likelihood that a particular identity will either be engaged or motivate action in a given situation. The ordering of identities in this hierarchy is achieved through attaching an identity salience (or level or meaning) to each of the identities that comprise the self.[51]

The framework is particularly useful for examining how community members, particularly those of a certain ethnicity, experienced the Atlantic fisheries. It is recognized within the field of maritime anthropology that the hierarchical salience of social identities evidently motivates the attitudes and behaviours of individuals, which is further reinforced by the number of social ties and the emotional investment in any given identity.[52] Because the Acadians of Southwest Nova Scotia held or were

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[50] Michael Hogg, "Social Identity Theory," in *Contemporary Social Psychological Theories*, ed. Peter Burke, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 112-115.

[51] Ryan Kelty and Ruth Kelty, "Human Dimensions of a Fishery at a Crossroads: Resource Valuation, Identity, and Way of Life in a Seasonal Fishing Community," *Society & natural resources* 24, no. 4 (2011): 334–348, https://doi.org/10.1080/089419209034768.

[52] See Apostle, *Challenges to Modernity*; Richard Apostle and Gene Barrett, *Emptying their Nets: Small Capital and Rural Industrialization in the Nova Scotia Fishing Industry* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); Tim Acott and Julie Urquhart, "Sense of Place and Socio-Cultural Values in Fishing Communities along the English Channel," in *Social Issues in Sustainable Fisheries Management*, ed. Julie Urquhart, Tim Acott, David Gilyard, and Minghua Zhao (Dordrecht: Springer,

subject to the influence of several powerful social identities — Acadian, Maritimer, French Canadian, fisher, and so forth — studying the different amalgamations or shifting hierarchical salience of these identities was selected as a key focus of this analysis.

Additionally, this research draws upon the theoretical perspective of embeddedness. Although commonly used within the field of maritime anthropology, embeddedness theory has a wide range of applications. For several decades, the idea of "economy" and "culture" as inextricably intertwined has been a major preoccupation of scholars across fields. According to anthropologist Bonnie McCay, embeddedness theory contends that a region's economic underpinning fundamentally shapes the "social networks, social structures, and culture of [each] local, geographically, and historically defined community."[53] The most succinct summary of embeddedness theory comes from marine sociologist Richard Apostle, who states that:

> ...the term refers to two distinct levels: it refers to the 'embedded' nature of individuals belonging in social groups such as family, kin group, community, church, or occupational group. It also refers to the 'embedded' nature of institutional interconnectivity, to the ways in which rules and procedures and normative standards of conduct in various institutional realms such as economic, cultural, and social life impinge on and shape each Other.[54]

Scholars such as Bonnie McCay, Rosemary Ommer, and Richard Apostle have applied the concept of embeddedness to explore economic decision-making in rural fishing communities, concluding that these processes often accommodated and abetted the local population's unique social, political, and cultural goals.[55] As such, the evolution of local fishing industries and their home communities

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2014), 257-277; James Urquhart and Tim Acott, "Constructing 'The Stade': Fishers' and non-fishers' identity and place attachment in Hastings, south-east England," *Marine Policy* 37, (201): 45-54, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2012 .04.004; and Newell and Ommer, *Fishing Places, Fishing People.*

[53] Bonnie McCay, "That's Not Right: Resistance to Enclosure in a Newfoundland Crab Fishery," in *Fishing Places, Fishing People: Traditions and Issues in Canadian Small-Scale Fisheries*, ed. Dianne Newell and Rosemary Ommer (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 303.

[54] Apostle, *Challenges to Modernity,* 236.

[55] McCay, "That's Not Right," 303; Apostle, *Challenges to Modernity,* 236.

has often been described as a reciprocal and "culturally constituted" process.[56] Ultimately, the theoretical perspectives of social identity and embeddedness were selected for this research as they align with and support the explicit goal of this thesis — to explore the localized and insular interface between community identity and the occupation of fishing in a rural region of the North Atlantic.

The concepts of modernity and tradition are also important to mention for the purposes of this thesis. In his 2009 book *The Quest of the Folk,* historian Ian McKay succinctly describes modernity as "urbanization, professionalization, and the rise of the positive state," and uses this definition to analyze the changing provincial identity of Nova Scotia during the middle decades of the twentieth century.[57] According to McKay, it was at this time that various "cultural producers" cultivated an archetypal image of Nova Scotia within tourism materials, literature, and commercial products that painted life in the province as largely rural, sea-bound, antimodern, and "Folk."[58] McKay argues that this lead some government officials to impose an "anti-modernist straight-jacket" upon ordinary Nova Scotians during the mid-twentieth century that often prevented rural workers from defending their own economic interests.[59] By framing ordinary people such as fishers as an inherently traditionalist "fisherfolk," McKay's cultural producers of the mid twentieth century adopted a complicated bureaucratic rationale that seemingly advocated for a return to the "organic solidarity" of the pastoral countryside, squashing any attempts for a rise of "capitalistic" fisher class to replace the province's "traditionalist" fisherfolk.[60] Given the Acadians and fishers are two key groups McKay argues had antimodernist sentiment and culture projected upon them during the mid-twentieth century, this thesis explores the ways in which traditionalism and modernity

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[56] McKay, "That's Not Right," 305.
[57] McKay, *Quest of the Folk,* 39.
[58] McKay, *Quest of the Folk,* 33.
[59] McKay, *Quest of the Folk,* 14-15, 52.
[60] McKay, *Quest of the Folk,* 52, 96-97, 103. For example, McKay argues that the popularity of the traditionalist "fisherfolk" archetype in Nova Scotia played a deciding role in the provincial government's decision to deny fishers collective bargaining rights. McKay, *Quest of the Folk,* 103, 249-250.

intersected in the Acadian fishing communities of Clare and Argyle. To do so, it looks at how processes of "urbanization, professionalization, and the rise of the positive state" unfolded within the region, discussing the rise of fisher organization, professionalization (including training, licencing, and management), and the changing relationship between local residents and state officials. Through this process, this thesis emphasizes the ways in which "modern" economic changes in Southwestern Nova Scotia bolstered the stability of "traditional" cultural practices and values, as well as popular forms of social regulation.

Chapter 1

Baiting the Hook: Historical Contexts of the Southwest Shore

During the late twentieth century, the economic and social structure of Southwest Nova Scotia was quite unique. The commercial fishing industry served as the economic backbone of nearly every single Acadian community in the region, comprising the vast majority of Clare and Argyle's manufacturing and labour force activity.[1] Across the two municipalities, Acadian fishing interests dominated, as the encroachment of large, vertically integrated corporate firms and fisheries unions was successfully withstood by local Acadian fishers and owner-operators.[2] It was also at this time that the social and cultural stability of Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia began to wane. While the average age of Clare and Argyle's Acadian residents continued to rise, the total number of native French speakers continued to decline.[3] By the end of the 1980s, the Southwest region was home to the second fastest assimilating Acadian population in Nova Scotia *and* the largest commercial lobster fishery in the country.[4]

However, it wasn't always this way. In fact, the economic structure of Clare and Argyle was historically quite diversified as opposed to fisheries dependent. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, foreign interests dominated the economy of Southwest Nova Scotia, while Acadian entrepreneurs were few and far in between. Acadian cultural institutions and movements

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[1] This statement is expanded upon in Chapter 2, see pages 70-81.
[2] Flint, "The Lobster Fishery of Southwest Nova Scotia," 45. Historian Sue Calhoun states that "More than any other fishery, Nova Scotia's has been dominated by large companies. By the middle of the 1970s, the two industry giants had emerged: H.B. Nickerson and Sons Ltd of North Sydney and National Sea Products Ltd. Of Halifax." *A Word to Say,* 85. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, this was not the case for the Acadian of Southwest Nova Scotia.
[3] See FANE, *Les héritiers de Lord Durham : le plan d'action, mai 1977* (Halifax: FANE, 1977), 90-95.
[4] Canada, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, *Lobster: LFA 34 SW Nova Scotia* (Dartmouth, Nova Scotia: Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Maritimes Region, 1997), https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2016/mpo-dfo/Fs76-1-1996-118-eng.pdf; FANE, *Les héritiers de Lord Durham,* 95. The Acadians of Yarmouth and Digby Counties were reportedly assimilating at a rate of 21% and 14% respectively, surpassed only by the Acadians of Richmond County in Cape Breton, who were assimilating at a rate of 22%.

were once exclusive to Clare and Argyle, which historically housed a large Acadian elite, powerful Catholic clergy, and served as the institutional stronghold of Acadian power. Before the mid-twentieth century, the purposes and parameters of Acadian national identity were almost entirely defined by those who lived and worked in Southwest Nova Scotia, while the fishing industry was largely driven by those who did not. What happened to flip these historical circumstances on their head, and why did the fisheries become so socially and culturally important in the region?

This chapter establishes the historical, social, cultural, and economic circumstances of Clare and Argyle's foremost Acadian fishing communities. Specifically, it serves to situate the period and location of study selected for this thesis within the broader narrative of Acadian national history. The first section identifies and evaluates the boundaries and scale of Clare and Argyle's leading Acadian fishing communities. It projects the idea of an Acadian fishery onto a spatial plane, foregrounding later discussions on the economic and ecological specificity of Southwest Nova Scotia's Acadian fishing efforts. The second section widens the scope of observation and chronicles the collective evolution of Acadian society in Southwest Nova Scotia, from the time of first settlement until the early 1960s. Here, the ways in which traditional social, cultural, and economic structures — as foundational to daily Acadian life in the region — shifted during the mid-to-late twentieth century are a subject of key consideration. The last section denotes how certain elements of legitimating identity discourse put forth during the Acadian neo-nationalist movement were incongruent with the lived realities of Southwest Nova Scotia's Acadian population. This section serves as a compliment to the final chapter, which details how the Acadians of Southwest Nova Scotia began to embody a unique patchwork version of Acadianité at the end of the 1960s that drew upon mainstream neo-nationalist ideology, rhetoric, and projects, yet was better suited to their rural, Nova Scotia reality.

Par en-haut ou par en-bas? : Situating the Acadian Fishing Communities

To begin, references to the Acadian population of Southwest Nova Scotia in this thesis are more precisely defined as references to a series of networked Acadian villages found within the Municipality of the District of Clare and the Municipality of the District of Argyle (henceforth referred to as Clare and Argyle). Both of these administrative territories are home to several historic francophone communities, although the Acadian settlement pattern of Clare is far more homologous than that of Argyle. The Southwest region's largest and most noteworthy Acadian communities are highlighted in figure 2, that equally illustrates the isolated and near-triangular spatial distribution of the unique coastal locale.

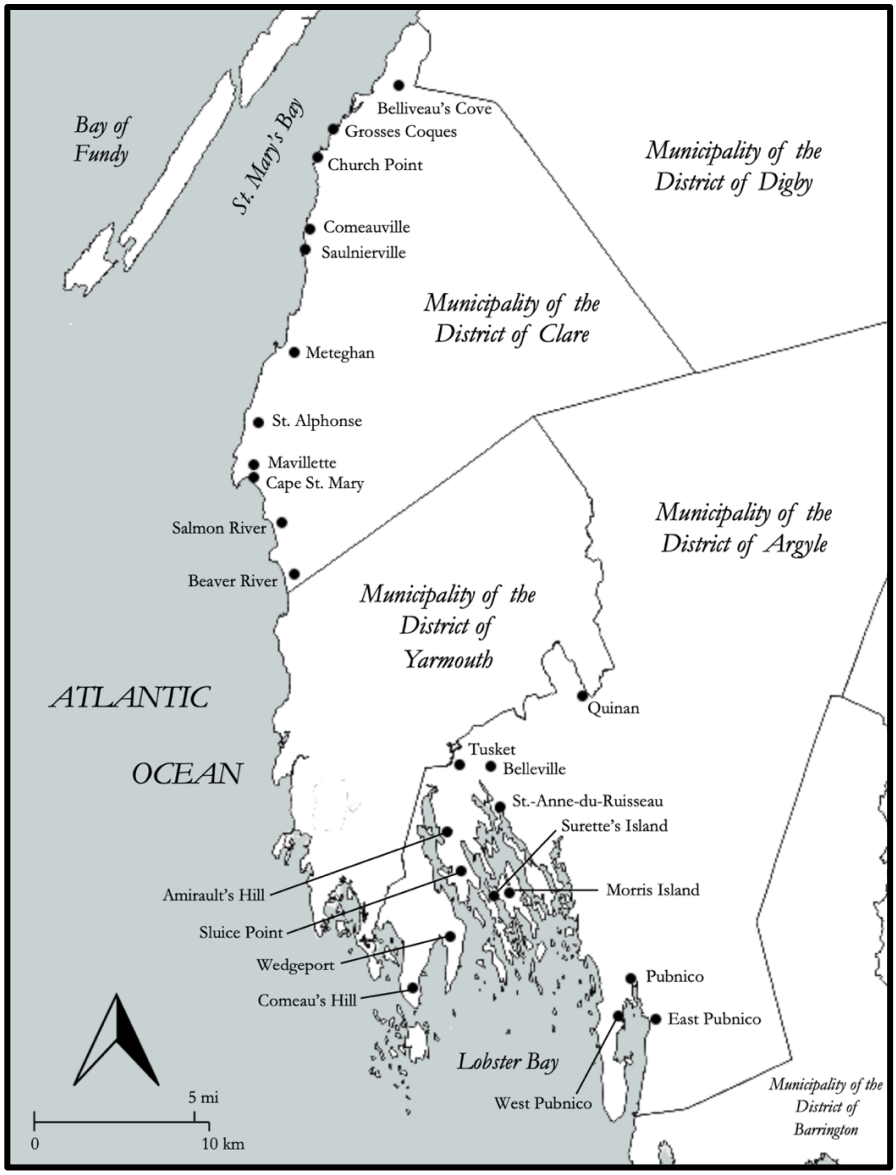

Figure 2. Map of the Historic Acadian Communities of Clare and Argyle. Produced by author using ArcGIS software (version 10.8.2). Topographic and boundary data sourced from the Province of Nova Scotia's online GeoData collection accessible at https://data.novascotia.ca/.

There are approximately forty unincorporated settlements or communities in Clare, most of which are located along the Baie Sainte-Marie (St. Mary's Bay) and home to a predominantly Acadian population. The region's two extremities of Belliveau's Cove and Beaver River are connected via the Evangeline Trail, a scenic roadway that traverses the Baie Sainte-Marie's littoral and virtually unbroken chain of Acadian villages. Although the territorial boundaries of Clare do extend quite far

inland, the coastal communities of the Baie Sainte-Marie have become their own sort of delineated territory, often referred to as the "French Shore" by anglophone Nova Scotians and *la Ville* (ou *Baie*) *francaise* by local francophone residents.[5] Constituting a sizeable portion of the province's southwestern most tip, Argyle is home to three distinct Acadian locales — the Pubnicos, Wedgeport, and Ste-Anne-du-Ruisseau (SAR) — that are wedged by the historically anglophone Greater Argyle area.[6]

The Acadian communities of Clare and Argyle have been closely linked since the late eighteenth century. Among local residents, it is common to describe Clare and Argyle comparatively, referencing the former as *par en-haut* (up) and the latter as *par en-bas* (down).[7] Recently, the region has even been referred to as "Clargyle" in promotional materials for the 2024 Congrès Mondial Acadien (CMA).[8]

Here, it is important to note that although the geographic colloquialism of "Southwest Nova Scotia," typically refers to the municipalities of Clare and Argyle when prefixed by "Acadian," the term has a vastly different spatial connotation within the realm of fisheries governance. When cited by government officials, politicians, and researchers associated with the fisheries, "Southwest" or "Southwestern" Nova Scotia usually refers to all fishing activity occurring within Shelburne, Yarmouth, and Digby counties.[9] Occasionally, the counties of Lunenburg, Queens, and even certain

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[5] Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians of Nova Scotia,* 88. Although it is not unusual to quantify the Baie Sainte-Marie as spanning anywhere from Digby Neck to Cap Sainte-Marie, Belliveau's Cove and Beaver River are both found within the administrative boundaries of the Municipality of the District of Clare.

[6] "The Pubnicos" is a colloquial term that referentially amalgamates the smaller villages of Lower West Pubnico, Middle West Pubnico, West Pubnico, Upper West Pubnico, Pubnico, East Pubnico, Middle East Pubnico, Centre East Pubnico, and Lower East Pubnico into one place, due to their geographical proximity.

[7] Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians of Nova Scotia*, 88.

[8] Société Nationale de l'Acadie, "Congrès Mondial Acadien," accessed May 17, 2023, https://snacadie.org/nos-dossiers/promotion/congres-mondial-acadien.

[9] This spatial boundary is employed by Apostle and Barrett in *Emptying our Nets,* xvii; as well as by Anthony Davis and Leonard Kasdan in "Bankrupt Government Policies and Belligerent Fisherman Responses: Dependency and Conflict in the Southwest Nova Scotia Small Boat Fisheries," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 19, no.1 (1984): 108-124, https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/article/674701/pdf. John David Flint denotes only Digby and Yarmouth County as Southwest Nova Scotia, in "The Lobster Fishery of Southwest Nova Scotia," 50; while G.J. Sharp and R.E. Duggan consider Southwest Nova Scotia to be Shelburne and Yarmouth County in *An Aerial Survey of Near-Shore and Mid-Shore*

parts of Halifax are included in this spatial delineation. For the purposes of continuity, clarity and specificity, this thesis deals only with data pertinent to the municipalities of Clare and Argyle as opposed to the broader "Southwest Shore."

Although most of Clare and Argyle's francophone settlements are located no farther than ten kilometres from the Atlantic seaboard, a select few managed to distinguish themselves economically and ecologically throughout the entropy of Nova Scotia's late twentieth century fisheries governance. Not only were these communities home to some of the Southwest region's most active fishing ports, deepest harbours, and largest wharves, but their core populace was overwhelmingly fisher, and overwhelmingly Acadian. In preparation of this thesis, (and with the goal of pinpointing the heartland of Southwest Nova Scotia's Acadian fisheries), a plethora of documents published by the DFO, Statistics Canada, and the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries were consulted, alongside hundreds of issues of *Le Courrier*, and dozens of manufacturer directories. After months of closely and comparatively analysing these sources, six Acadian fishing communities (or locales) emerged as the most historically significant and well defined during the late twentieth century. In alignment with the naming conventions, statistical divisions, and manufacturing classifications employed by these diverse institutions, the Acadian fishing communities selected for closer analysis in this thesis are defined as follows: 1) West Pubnico, 2) Ste-Anne-du-Ruisseau (SAR), and 3) Wedgeport in the Municipality of the District of Argyle; and 1) Meteghan, 2) Church Point, and 3) Saulnierville in the Municipality of the District of Clare.

Lobster Fishing Distribution off Southwestern Nova Scotia, Spring and Fall 1983-1984 (Halifax: Fisheries Research Branch, Halifax Fisheries Research Laboratory, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 1985), 3, https://science-catalogue.canada.ca/record=3847970~S6.

Table 1. Representative Place Names for the Acadian Fishing Communities of Southwest Nova Scotia by Enumeration Area.

	Incorporated Fishing Communities	Statistics Canada EA
West Pubnico	Middle West Pubnico	003
	Lower West Pubnico	004
	Upper West Pubnico and West Pubnico	005
SAR	Surettes Island and Morris Island	006
	Amirault's Hill and Sluice Point	012
	Tusket, Tusket Falls, Pleasant Lake, and Hubbard's Point	013
	Ste-Anne-du-Ruisseau, Belleville, and Abrams River	014
Wedgeport	Lower Wedgeport and Comeau's Hill	009
	Wedgeport	010
	Upper Wedgeport, Plymouth, and Little River Harbour	011
Meteghan	Beaver River, Salmon River, Lake Doucette, and Mayflower	152
	Cape St. Mary and Mavillette	153
	St. Alphonse	154
	Meteghan Centre	155
	Meteghan and St. Martin	156
	Meteghan Station, Meteghan River, and St. Benoni	157
Church Point	Church Point	162
	Grosses Coques	163
	Belliveau's Cove	164
Saulnierville	Lower Saulnierville and Saulnierville Station	158
	Saulnierville	159
	Comeauville	160

Source: Fishing community names from Raymond, *Scotia-Fundy Region Fishing Community Profiles* (1985), 268-316; and EA data from Statistics Canada, Geographic Attribute File (GAF), 1981 Census (1983). *Note:* For the purposes of brevity, the community referred to in Raymond's report as "Ste. Anne Du Ruisseau/Amirault's Hill/ Surettes Island" has been shortened to Ste-Anne-du-Ruisseau or SAR; Wedgeport/Little River Harbour has been shortened to Wedgeport; Cape St. Mary/Meteghan has been shortened to Meteghan; Saulnierville/Comeauville has been shortened to Saulnierville. Belliveau's Cove, which comprises the unincorporated settlements of Belliveau's Cove and Grosses Coques in Raymond's report has been amalgamated with that of Church Point. East Pubnico and Pubnico have been omitted from this study as the two locales were home to a majority English population during the twentieth century.

As outlined in table 1, these six "fishing communities" are actually an amalgamation of several smaller, unincorporated Acadian settlements that have been grouped together for the purposes of brevity and scope. Within the primary source material, and perhaps most importantly,

among local historians and archivists with whom I spoke, it was not uncommon to encounter the term "Pubnico" being used interchangeably with Upper West Pubnico or Lower West Pubnico when describing fishing efforts, nor was it unusual to see a fishing company based out of Salmon River or Mavillette having moored its vessels at the wharf in Meteghan. For example, the DFO's 1982 *Guide to Small Craft Harbours, Nova Scotia* highlights only Pubnico, Wedgeport, and Meteghan as key sites on its provincial map of small craft harbours, despite the fact that these toponyms have a combined total of eighteen distinct harbours clustered around them.[10] Of the same token, Janice Raymond's 1985 DFO report *Scotia-Fundy Region Fishing Community Profiles* groups together several fishing communities in Clare and Argyle for the purposes of creating statistical survey areas, combining upwards of thirteen unincorporated settlements into various composite communities, such as "West Pubnico," "Ste. Anne Du Ruisseau/Amirault's Hill/ Surettes Island," and "Saulnierville/Comeauville."[11] It is also important to note that not all residents of central fishing outposts like Meteghan or West Pubnico worked in the fisheries, nor did all of the region's fishers live in these industrial centres. Additionally, not all of Clare and Argyle's coastal communities had their own harbours or commercial wharves, which restricted the ability of larger fishing vessels to moor and thus hindered the expansion, modernization, and intensification of small-scale fishing efforts. In sum, the decision to amalgamate forty-one Acadian settlements across Clare and Argyle into only six distinct fishing communities for this thesis was both measured and informed. By customising the boundaries of Clare and Argyle's Acadian fishing communities, their demography and economic structures can be more reasonably scoped and clearly communicated (figure 3).

[10] Canada, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, *Guide to Small Craft Harbours, Nova Scotia* (Ottawa: Minister of Services and Supply Canada, 1982), https://waves-vagues.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/library-bibliotheque/13835.pdf.
[11] Raymond, *Scotia-Fundy,* 268-213.

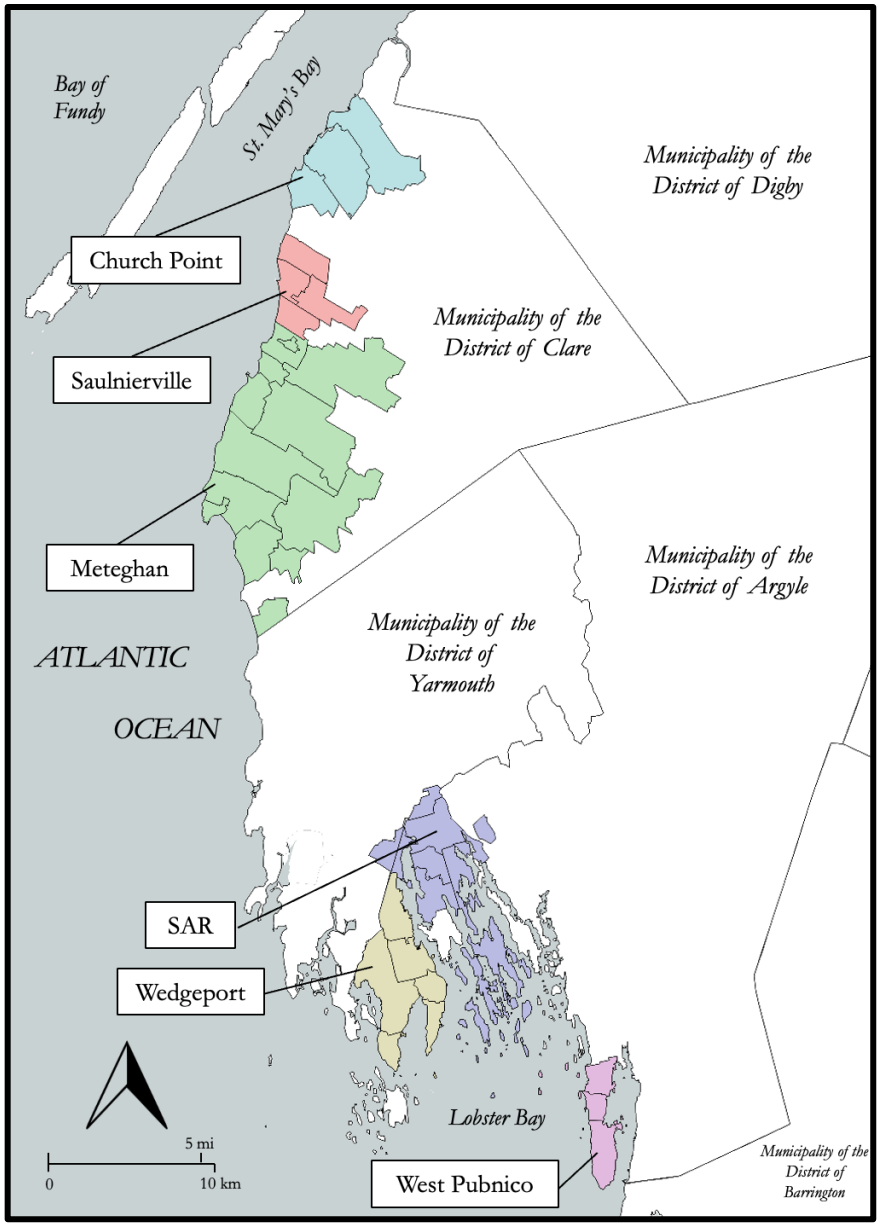

Figure 3. Map of the Acadian Fishing Communities of Clare and Argyle. Produced by author using ArcGIS software (version 10.8.2). Topographic and boundary data sourced from the Province of Nova Scotia's online GeoData collection accessible at https://data.novascotia.ca/.

Apart from representing the heartland of the Acadian fishing effort in Southwest Nova Scotia, these six communities also served as a networked hub for Acadian culture and social life. During the mid-to-late twentieth century, various Acadian politicians, activists, artists, and entrepreneurs of the Southwest Shore lived and worked across these six communities. Three of the

FANE's contemporary directors had their offices based out of Clare, including the organization's first president Father Léger Comeau of Saulnierville, as well as Paul Comeau and Louise Comeau of Meteghan.[12] Others such as Eddie Comeau and Gérald Boudreau, who both served as the Secretary General of the Clare-Argyle School Board operated out of SAR.[13] Popular Acadian filmmaker Phil Comeau lived in Saulnierville and Meteghan during the 1970s and 1980s, as did author and playwright Germaine Comeau.[14] Important Acadian institutions such as *Le Courrier*, the Université Sainte-Anne, and the FANE were not only based out of these communities, but overwhelmingly concentrated their efforts on them. Most of the Université Sainte-Anne's faculty resided in and around Church Point during the period of study, and *Le Courrier* was famously published in West Pubnico until 1972 when the paper moved to the nearby town of Yarmouth.[15] Popular cultural celebrations like the Festival Acadien de Clare, the Festival Acadien de St-Anne-du Ruisseau, and Wedgeport's Annual Tuna Festival were entirely based in the Acadian fishing communities of Clare and Argyle and attracted much larger crowds than similar Acadian events held in Halifax.[16] Contemporary census data further suggests that the Acadian presence in Clare and Argyle was centralized around these six coastal communities.

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[12] "Un nouveau directeur administratif : Paul remplace Paul" *Le Courrier*, September 11, 1975, 1-2. Paul Comeau also ran as the NDP candidate for Clare in the 1981 federal general election, served as the president of Sainte Anne's student association, the president of the Federation des Francophones hors Quebec, the municipal councillor for Arichat (an Acadian community located in Richmond County, Nova Scotia), and the president of Clare's NDP Association. Richard Landry, "Paul Comeau élu candidat NPD en Clare," *Le Courrier*, September 9, 1981, 3. Father Léger Comeau was heavily involved in the FANE and the administrative side of the Université Sainte-Anne throughout the 1960s and 1970s, as was Louise Comeau. Poplyansky, "Au carrefour de deux Acadies," 81-89; "L'assemblée annuelle: Louise Comeau est élue présidente," *Le Courrier*, June 19, 1975, 1.

[13] "Conseil Scolaire Clare-Argyle: L'école de Pubnico-est restera ouverte," *Le Courrier*, May 26, 1982; "Conseil Scolaire Clare-Argyle: Eddie Comeau est confirmé dans ses fonctions," *Le Courrier*, March 14, 1984, 1.

[14] Janice Deveau, "Philbert Comeau parle du cinema en Acadie," *Le Courrier*, August 23, 1979, 8; Daniel AuCoin, "Les pêcheurs déportés," *Le Courrier*, August 8, 1974, 8. The work of both artists centered around the Acadian fishing communities of Clare and Argyle, often documenting the conditions of residents' work.

[15] Cyrille LeBlanc, "Editorial: Le Petit Courrier deviant provincial," *Le Courrier*, May 25, 1972, 1.

[16] "La région de Clare semble être mieux connue des Américains que des Canadiens," *Le Courrier*, July 4, 1974, 4. The 1983 Festival Acadien de Clare attracted upwards of ten thousand visitors on its opening evening, while the opening of the third annual Festival acadien de Halifax attracted only 225 visitors, despite Halifax having a larger Acadian population. Gilles Boivin, "28e Festival acadien de Clare," *Le Courrier*, July 13, 1983, 1-2; Richard Landry "Festival acadien de Halifax 1983," *Le Courrier*, June 15, 1983, 1-2.

Table 2. Demography of the Acadian Fishing Communities of Clare and Argyle, 1966-1981

	Total Population			Ethnic Origin, French	Mother Tongue, French	Population %, Mother Tongue, French
	1966	**1971**	**1981**	**1981**		
Argyle, Mun.	7580	8515	8949	6065	5420	61
West Pubnico	929	1142	1960	1670	1590	81
SAR	2151	2201	2545	1965	1715	67
Wedgeport	2004	2201	2224	1495	1446	65
F.C. Total	5084	5544	6729	5130	4751	71
Clare, Mun.	8318	8975	9598	7335	6905	64
Meteghan	3443	3416	3500	2865	2840	81
Church Point	1111	1104	1610	1310	1230	76
Saulnierville	1100	1109	1980	1835	1660	84
F.C. Total	5654	5629	7090	6010	5730	85

Source: Raymond, *Fishing Community Profiles,* 258-264 and 304-316; Statistics Canada, Geographic Attribute File (GAF), 1981 Census (1983); and Canada, Statistics Canada*, Special Bulletin, 1971 Census of Canada. Population: Unincorporated Settlements* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1973), https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2017/statcan/CS92-771-1971.pdf.
Note: The combined data for each of the three fishing communities are listed as "F.C. Total."

As outlined in table 2, approximately 75% of Clare and Argyle's total population lived in or around the six Acadian fishing communities selected for this thesis. Accordingly, while not all of the regions' residents were exposed to the unique socio-economic, ecological, and geographical structuration of rural fishing communities, the vast majority were. Additionally, a remarkable 88% of Argyle's francophone population and 83% of Clare's lived within fishing communities by 1981, denoting a high level of Acadian involvement in the industry, as well as its embeddedness within Acadian territory. On average, historic Acadian communities located further inland had a much lower francophone population during the same period. For example, Doucetteville in Clare and East Quinan in Argyle had exceptionally low francophone residency during 1981. French speaking

residents constituted a mere 6% of Doucetteville's total population, and 4% of East Quinan's.[17] Considering the social, cultural, and economic importance of Clare and Argyle's six Acadian fishing communities, as well as their comparatively large francophone population, exploring the dynamic relationship between the Acadian fishing effort in Southwest Nova Scotia and localized expressions of Acadianité provides a nuanced and pointed portrait of daily life during the neo-nationalist period.

L'isolement ou l'assimilation? : Historical Contexts of Clare and Argyle

The Acadian fishing communities of Southwest Nova Scotia have a unique regional history that spans nearly four centuries and is strongly tied to the fisheries sector. As acclaimed Acadian historian Naomi Griffiths wrote in her 1982 book *The Acadians: Creation of a People*, "a particular vision of history underlies today's Acadians' self-worth."[18] In order to fully understand and appreciate the distinctiveness of Clare and Argyle's Acadian fishing communities, it is necessary to first delve into its complex history, as shaped by its unique geography, demography, and variable dynamics of Acadian (dis)empowerment.

Port-Royal, the first French settlement in "Acadie" was established in 1605 along the north shore of the Rivière-du-Dauphin, a tidal estuary known to the Mi'kmaq as Nme'juaqnek or "the place of bountiful fish."[19] Located approximately fifty kilometers northeast of Belliveau's Cove (as the crow flies), early settlers of Port Royal spent their first few years adopting the Indigenous method of inshore brush weir fishing along the Rivière-du-Dauphin, as well as establishing a seasonal dry cod fishery along the peninsula's Atlantic seaboard.[20]

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[17] Data from the 1981 Census of Canada, Mother Tongue, French and Total Population. Corberrie falls under EA 111, Doucetteville EA 161, East Quinan EA 106, and Quinan EA 016.
[18] Naomi Griffiths, *The Acadians: Creation of a People* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1973), 118.
[19] The area would later be known as the Annapolis River or Annapolis Royal by the English. Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians,* 10.
[20] Ross and Deveau, *Acadians of Nova Scotia,* 10-16.

While Clare was not settled by the Acadians until the 1760s, Acadian residency began in Argyle as early as 1613. It was at this time that Charles La Tour, who intermittently served as the governor of Acadie during the mid-seventeenth century, established primary residence near Cape Sable after Port-Royal was destroyed.[21] Upon his reinstatement as governor of Acadie in 1651, La Tour granted French lieutenant-major Philippe Mius d'Entremont a seigneury along the length of Pubnico Harbour, through which the region's settlers established a flourishing fishery.[22] Today, the Pubnicos are known as one of the Southwest region's most prosperous fishing enclaves, with many residents tracing their lineage directly back to the seigneury's original founding family. In fact, the surname d'Entremont has become so closely associated with the Pubnicos that journalist Jacques Coulon wrote an entire piece about it for the Ottawa newspaper *Le Droit* in 1967, aptly titled "À Pubnico, la moitié des gens s'appellent d'Entremont."[23] One reporter for *The Saturday Evening Post* even described the region as an "Acadian Utopia" in 1947, going on to humorously state that Pubnico "...has no crime, poverty or illiteracy, no local taxes, lawsuits or divorce. Yet, despite its beauties, has one dispirited citizen - the postmaster, who has to deliver letters addressed to Joseph d'Entremont to one among nine different individuals."[24]

The dynamics of peninsular Acadie dramatically shifted in August 1755 on the eve of *Le Grand Dérangement,* an Acadian expression for the population's forceful expulsion by British colonials.[25] While the exact number of Acadians deported from their homeland remains a matter of

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[21] Historically, Cape Sable was used to refer to the larger Argyle region as opposed to its modern associations with the island bearing the same name. Murray Barnard, *Sea, Salt, and Sweat*: *A Story of Nova Scotia and the Vast Atlantic Fishery* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries, 1986), 24; Ross and Deveau, *Acadians of Nova Scotia,* 15-19.

[22] Barnard, *Sea, Salt, and Sweat*, 24. Phillipe Mius d'Entremont would be known as the first Baron of Pombomcoup, now spelled Pubnico. Ross and Deveau, *Acadians of Nova Scotia,* 19.

[23] Jacques Coulon, "À Pubnico, la moitié des gens s'appellent d'Entremont," *Le Droit* (Ottawa), November 25, 1967, 30-35, https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/4215133?docsearchtext=pubnico.

[24] *The Saturday Evening Post* (New York) April 19, 1947, as cited in Clarence d'Entremont, "Pubnico is Something to Brag About," *Yarmouth Vanguard* (Yarmouth, NS), January 16, 1990.

[25] In 1730, after living under British rule for a number of years, the Acadians were asked to swear an oath of unconditional loyalty to the British crown, as was required of all conquered subjects. The Acadians famously responded by expressing their neutrality towards the British, French, and the Mi'kmaq, a position that gave Acadian identity added political salience. Nevertheless, British authorities came to view Acadian neutrality as intolerable. After the Acadians

debate, most historians place their estimates somewhere in the vicinity of seven to ten thousand.[26] The majority of Acadian deportees were relocated to areas of New England now known as Massachusetts and Connecticut, although some Acadians managed to avoid capture and migrated to modern Prince Edward Island, northern New Brunswick, and the Gaspé Peninsula.[27] Collectively, the Acadians remained in a state of exile until English-French hostilities finally ceased in North America after the 1763 ratification of the Treaty of Paris.[28]

As the Acadians began to gradually return to their ancestral homeland throughout the 1760s, they were barred from resettling their former lands that were now occupied by American settlers — many hailing from the exact location the Acadians had just left. Between 1760 and 1763, approximately 12,500 settlers from New England migrated to Southwest Nova Scotia in an unprecedented state-sanctioned exodus designed to repopulate expropriated Acadian lands and establish new Protestant townships in their place.[29] Over half of the settlers granted land in the Southwest portion of the province were fishers, later settling the township of Liverpool and surrounding lands between 1760 and 1761.[30]

As early as 1766, the Acadians of Argyle (specifically, Pubnico) began to return from their Boston exile, cementing their place in Acadian history as "the last to be deported…but the first to return."[31] By 1767, nearly 2,500 acres of land along the coast of Pubnico Harbour had been granted

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refused to swear their allegiance to the British crown for a second time in 1755, the British put forth an order to deport the population. See chapters seven to ten and fourteen to sixteen of Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian.*

[26] Robert Leblanc, "The Acadian Migrations," *Cahiers de géographie du Québec* 11, no. 24 (1967) : 528, https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/10.7202/020742ar. These expulsions occurred in several waves between 1755 and 1763.

[27] Leblanc, "The Acadian Migrations," 528-530.

[28] Leblanc, "The Acadian Migrations," 533.

[29] Leblanc, "The Acadian Migrations," 528, 530. Lawrence had issued a proclamation in 1759 which entitled all emigrants to a minimum of one hundred acres of rent-free land upon their arrival.

[30] Barnard, *Sea, Salt, and Sweat,* 32.

[31] Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians,* 78. The Acadians of modern Argyle were not deported en-masse like their counterparts in Port Royal. During the first raid on Le Passage (now known as Barrington Passage, the region's key fishing outpost), approximately seventy-two Acadian men, women, and children were captured and deported to Boston. Acadians in the region would remain fairly undisturbed until September of 1758, when the entire village was destroyed and fleeing inhabitants were captured as prisoners. Many were held in Halifax throughout 1759 until being deported to

to the newly repatriated Acadians, resulting in the creation of several new communities such as Ste-Anne-du-Ruisseau, Wedgeport, and Tusket.[32] Due to the fragmented geography of the region and the sporadic allotment of Acadian land grants, the province's southwestern most Acadian communities were isolated from other Acadian settlements along the Bay of Fundy. Accordingly, and in the words of Ross and Deveau, "the French and English-speaking settlements of Argyle evolved side by side, neither culture remained isolated from the other."[33]

However, the Acadians of Clare and Argyle still managed to develop strong kinship networks in the post-deportation period. This is mainly due to the fact that the Acadians resident and missionary Catholic priests often lived in Church Point, but regularly travelled to Argyle.[34] As a result of this arrangement, families often travelled between the two communities by sea to visit their priest, initiating contact between residents. Additionally, marriages between Acadians and anglophones were relatively rare in the post-deportation period, as Yarmouth's English-speaking population was of Protestant faith.[35] By the late eighteenth century, the historic Acadians surnames of Clare and Argyle began to transmute and multiply by virtue of intercommunity marriage alliances.

While the municipality of Clare has long been home to the largest Acadian population in the province, most of the region's original residents were actually the descendants of Acadians captured at Port Royal (or thereabouts) in 1755. In fact, the Acadians only arrived in Clare during the mid 1760s, after the Lawrence government dedicated a large tract of infertile, coastal land for the purposes of Acadian resettlement along the Baie Sainte-Marie.[36] Throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century, the Acadians of Clare gradually extended their territory southward, resulting in

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Cherbourg, France, in November of 1760. The village of Pubnico was subject to two raids in 1756 and 1758, the latter resulting in the settlements' complete destruction. Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians,* 78.

[32] Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians,* 78-79.

[33] Argyle Township Court House & Archives, "An Acadian Parish Reborn: Acadian Families of Argyle," last modified June 2023, https://archives.novascotia.ca/acadian/reborn/families/; Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians,* 79.

[34] Argyle Township Court House & Archives, "An Acadian Parish Reborn,"; Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians,* 79.

[35] Argyle Township Court House & Archives, "An Acadian Parish Reborn,"; Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians,* 79.

[36] Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians,* 99. This decision was made in 1768.

the creation of an impressively uniform, continuous, and interconnected chain of Acadian villages between the settlements of Mavillette and Salmon River (see figure 2).[37] Contrary to the Acadian situation in Argyle, the Acadians of the Baie Sainte-Marie benefitted from having been assigned such an expansive, uniform, and contained area of land upon their eighteenth century return to Nova Scotia, fostering a greater sense of community and cultural cohesion.

By the late nineteenth century, Clare had emerged as the institutional stronghold of Acadian identity in Nova Scotia, serving as the meeting place for several leaders of the "Acadian Renaissance."[38] Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, the Acadian elite launched a campaign to unite the socially, culturally, and geographically dispersed Acadian population of the Maritime provinces. After attending the Société Saint-Jean Baptiste conference in Quebec in 1880, many Acadian leaders and clergy members decided to transplant the spirit of collective organization to their local communities, resulting in the organization of the Acadian National Conventions in Memramcook New Brunswick (1881), Miscouche, Prince Edward Island (1883) and Church Point, Nova Scotia (1890).[39] During these conferences, several iconic symbols of Acadianité were adopted by the collective, including the national flag, national anthem, and national holiday of August 15.[40]

Apart from symbolically consolidating Acadian cultural identity, the Acadian Renaissance also served to illuminate longstanding debates and issues about the underdevelopment of Nova

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[37] Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians,* 91-92. By the mid-1770s, approximately thirty Acadian families were granted coastal plots of land in the region, most having returned from their exile in Massachusetts. As observed in 1785, the Acadian population began to branch out, founding the villages of Comeauville, Saulnierville, and Meteghan. The coastline spanning from Mavillette to Salmon River would further be colonized after additional land was granted in 1805.
[38] The decades long epoch of Acadian nation building which began in the 1880s would first be coined the Acadian Renaissance by historians in the early twentieth century and would later be known as the era of traditional Acadian nationalism. See Antoine Bernard, *Histoire de la survivance acadienne, 1755-1935* (Montréal: Les Clercs de Saint-Viateur, 1935); Camille Derouet, "La Renaissance de la Nationalité Française en Acadie," Bibliothèque nationale du Canada, Microfiche, reel 02677, https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.02677/20; and Camille Richard, "Le discours idéologique des conventions nationales et les origines du nationalisme acadien: réflexions sur la question nationale," *Les Cahiers de la Société historique acadienne* 17, no. 3 (1986): 73-87.
[39] Richard, "Le discours idéologique," 80-87.
[40] Richard, "Le discours idéologique," 73-80; Derouet, "La Renaissance de la Nationalité," 930-932.

Scotia's Acadian communities.[41] In an effort to stimulate national unity, territoriality, and economic growth, leading thinkers of the Acadian Renaissance began to advocate for a return to pastoralism and farming among the rural Acadian population. Nationalist leaders such as Edme Rameau de Saint-Père and Archbishop Joseph-Octave Plessis perpetuated the belief that maritime life posed a categorical danger to Acadian existence in Nova Scotia, arguing that seafaring immobilized Acadians to the coastline, fragmented their land, isolated their settlements, and encouraged the emigration of young people.[42] Rameau argued that fishing was to be avoided, stating of the Acadians "ce serait maintenant de leur part s'exposer à des graves mécomptes, que de persister dans cette tradition," while Plessis comparatively described fishers as "enclins à l'oisiveté et au fête," and farmers as "industrieux et d'une probité sans reproche."[43] Plessis was particularly concerned with the rise of coastal trade in Acadian settlements like Clare and Argyle, arguing that "Cette allée et venue dans les ports étrangers les expose inévitablement à faire des rencontres et à lier des rapports funestes…à [leurs] vertus qui se dissipent dans le tumulte du monde et dans l'embarras des affaires."[44] The Acadian press furthered the defamatory discourse put forth by the elite, with one 1888 article published in *Le Moniteur Acadien* stating: "[l]es pêcheries, les chantiers, le système de journalier, sont…les ennemis de la colonisation. Pour ceux qui ont été élevés à ce système…ils n'ont ni l'énergie, ni le talent de se livrer à une culture intelligente et, par conséquent, ils restent dans leur condition qui n'a aucun degré d'ambition."[45]

However, in the midst of his anti-maritime tirade Rameau noted that the Acadians of Southwest Nova Scotia were different from those he had observed elsewhere, and that their

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[41] Richard, "Le discours idéologique," 73-80.
[42] Clarke, "Pêches et identité en Acadie," 77-78.
[43] Edme Rameau de Saint-Père, *Les Français en Amérique, Acadiens et Canadiens* (Paris: Imprimerie de Pillet Fils Aîné, 1859), https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.36248/8, 111; Joseph-Octave Plessis, "Le journal des visites pastorales de Mgr Joseph-Octave Plessis en Acadie 1811, 1812, 1815," *Les cahiers de la société historique acadienne* 11, no. 1-3 (1980): 141.
[44] Plessis, "Le journal des visites pastorales," 141.
[45] See page 2 of *Le Moniteur Acadien* (Shediac, N.B.), May 8, 1888.

participation in the pastoralist project may prove quite difficult. In fact, Rameau specifically described the Acadians of the Baie Sainte-Marie as "se décident difficilement à quitter le rivage pour se livrer, dans l'intérieur, à une vie purement Agricole."[46] Evidently, as early as the first Acadian nationalist movement, the Acadians of Clare and Argyle were being perceived differently than from those New Brunswick. Their lived realities were deemed an impediment to their participation in the Acadian Renaissance, aligning with the nationalist rhetoric of the time. Although fishing was not necessarily adopted as a localized tenet of Acadianité until much later, this early example provides insight into how fishing was viewed as incongruent with the nationalizing propensity of Acadian identity, forcing those from Southwest Nova Scotia to invent their own brand of ethnic pride.

The need to address Acadian illiteracy and emigration were also issues of key concern for nationalist leaders in Clare. During the mid 1880s, a team of local priests from Church Point began campaigning for the creation of an Acadian educational institution on the Baie Sainte-Marie.[47] After seven long years of fundraising, correspondence, and construction, the group succeeded in opening Nova Scotia's first francophone post-secondary school, Collège Sainte-Anne, in 1890.[48]

For nearly a century prior to its secularization, the Collège Sainte-Anne was administered by the Canadian Eudist Priesthood, an apostolate group associated with the Roman Catholic Church.[49] Despite the fact that Sainte-Anne was technically governed as a part of the Diocese of Halifax until 1954, a clerical caveat allowed for the Eudist Priesthood to maintain complete autonomy over all of the institution's academic and administrative activities.[50] As noted by historian Marc-Adélard

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[46] Edme Rameau de Saint-Père, "Un voyage en Acadie – 1860," *L'économiste francaise* 10, (1862) : 119.
[47] René LeBlanc and Micheline Laliberté, *Sainte-Anne, collège et université, 1890-1990* (Church Point, NS: Université Sainte-Anne, 1990), 344-363.
[48] LeBlanc and Laliberté, *Sainte-Anne*, 344-363.
[49] In fact, the Eudist congregation first arrived in North America in 1890 to accept responsibility for administrating the Collège Sainte-Anne, at the request of Father Parker from Church Point. LeBlanc and Laliberté, *Sainte-Anne*, 344-363; Maurice LeBlanc, "Les Pères Eudistes en Acadie," *Les cahiers de la société historique acadienne* 28, no. 2-3 (1997): 123-144, https://societehistoriqueacadienne.files.wordpress.com/2018/04/2802_total.pdf.
[50] Marc-Adélard Tremblay, "Les Acadiens de la Baie Française : l'Histoire d'une Survivance," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique Francaise* 15, no. 4 (1962): 534.

Tremblay, this retention of localized institutional autonomy was critical to Acadian survival in the region, as it played a decisive role in the rise of a local Acadian elite.[51]

In 1961, Sainte-Anne opened its doors to female students for the first time.[52] Concurrently, disciplinary practices started to become more lenient, and the university's longstanding humanities curriculum was updated in 1963 to accommodate contemporary academic standards.[53] By 1967, the university had both a recognized teachers' and a students' association.[54] In light of these developments – and a general shortage of vocations among resident Eudists - the religious influence at Sainte-Anne began to dissipate, leading to its total secularization in 1971.[55] The Collège Sainte-Anne was eventually renamed the Université Sainte-Anne in 1977, and served as the only Acadian institute of higher learning in Atlantic Canada prior to the founding of the Université de Moncton in 1963.[56]

The role of the Catholic Church in leading the Acadian community and mediating its interactions with the outside world unquestionably defined daily life in Clare and Argyle for the majority of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[57] Prior to the Second World War, there were very few Acadian owned industries or major businesses in Clare and Argyle, resulting in very little class difference across communities. Explicitly, the Southwest Shore lacked the sort of Acadian "business class" that was on the rise in Moncton.[58] In addition to the fact that 99% of Clare's residents identified as Roman Catholic during the mid-nineteenth century, as did 66% of Argyle's, the rise of

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[51] Tremblay, "Les Acadiens de la Baie Française," 534.
[52] Michael Poplyansky, "Le moment 68 au Collège Saint-Anne : la mentalité estudiantine au moment de la grevé de 1968," *Historical Studies in Education* 30, no. 1 (2018): 122, https://doi.org/10.32316/hse/rhe.v30i1.4556.
[53] LeBlanc and Laliberté, *Sainte-Anne*, 322-323; Poplyansky, "Le moment 68," 122.
[54] LeBlanc and Laliberté, *Sainte-Anne*, 417; Poplyansky, "Le moment 68," 122.
[55] LeBlanc and Laliberté, *Sainte-Anne*, 315; Poplyansky, "Le moment 68," 122.
[56] LeBlanc and Laliberté, *Sainte-Anne*, 344-363; Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians,* 97-98. For more information on the Eudists in Clare, see Maurice LeBlanc, "Les Pères Eudistes en Acadie," *Les cahiers de la société historique acadienne* 28, no. 2-3 (1997): 123-144, https://societehistoriqueacadienne.files.wordpress.com/2018/04/2802_total.pdf.
[57] Tremblay, "Les Acadiens de la Baie Française," 551.
[58] For more information on the rise of an Acadian business class in Moncton, see Sheila Andrews, *The Development of Elites in Acadian New Brunswick, 1861-1881* (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 1996).

an egalitarian ideology in Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia was thus greatly influenced by the region's lack of a commercial, educated, or political elite.[59]

Nevertheless, the Acadians of Clare and Argyle still managed to secure relative economic prosperity during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The Acadian fishing effort in Argyle gained rapid momentum during the post-deportation period, mainly due to the close proximity of several offshore fishing banks and the commercial coasting markets of Boston.[60] By the 1860s, Wedgeport, SAR, and West Pubnico, were home to the most fishers and fishing vessels in all of Yarmouth County.[61] In fact, the 1861 Nova Scotia census suggests that a staggering 99% of West Pubnico's male residents between the ages of fifteen and sixty worked as fishers.[62] This was mainly due to the d'Entremont and d'Éon families, who collectively employed 144 men and owned 27% of the Southwest region's schooners.[63] In 1882, a correspondent of the *Yarmouth Herald* confirmed the pervasiveness of the Acadian fishing effort in West Pubnico, stating:

> Yarmouth County in her fishery product already holds a foremost place; and that portion of it known as West Pubnico is not surpassed by any settlement in Nova Scotia in the thrift and independence of its people… In the township of Argyle, except the trades and office-holders, every man is a shipwright or a fisherman. Every able-bodied Frenchman there can handle a broad-axe or a fishing line with equal skill.[64]

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[59] The survey areas of Meteghan and Clare (Session House) had a combined total population of 3,117, and 3,079 Roman Catholics. The survey areas of Plymouth (Wedgeport), Pubnico, and Tusket (S-A-R) had a combined total population of 4,856, and 3,198 Roman Catholics. See various sections of Nova Scotia, Secretary Board of Statistics, *Census of Nova Scotia, 1861* (Halifax: Order of the Government, 1862), https://ia800308.us.archive.org/23/items/18619818611862eng/18619818611862eng.pdf.

[60] Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians,* 80.

[61] Secretary Board of Statistics, *Census of Nova Scotia, 1861.*

[62] Pubnico was reportedly home to 354 men aged fifteen to sixty, and 369 fishers. See various sections of Secretary Board of Statistics, *Census of Nova Scotia, 1861.*

[63] Landry, "Acadian Fisheries of Southwest Nova Scotia," 58-59.

[64] Cited in Robert McLeod, *Markland, or, Nova Scotia: Its History, Natural Resources, and Native Beauties* (Berwick, NS: Markland Publishing Company, 1903), 162, https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.77860/121.

Historically, the Acadians of Clare benefitted from a more diversified economy than that of Argyle. The forests surrounding Clare were described as an "inexhaustible gold mine," at the turn of the nineteenth century, and by 1864 the region was home to forty-five family-owned sawmills.[65] The quality and quantity of lumber in Clare equally encouraged the rise of a local shipbuilding industry during the late nineteenth century that was centralized in the Acadian fishing communities of Belliveau's Cove, Grosses Coques, Church Point, and Meteghan.[66] During the 1870s, the lumber and shipbuilding industry in Clare began to wane. Shipyards that had previously built an average of twelve vessels per year were down to only one or two by 1885, as the lumber industry hurtled towards a near total collapse.[67] It was also at this time that the Acadian fishing sector in Clare began to expand, as residents realized that "fishing might become their most stable source of income."[68]

As alternative building materials and fishing technologies rose in popularity during the interwar period, the shipbuilding industry in Clare gradually recovered.[69] During the 1940s, the warship building industry arrived in Meteghan, bringing unprecedented economic prosperity as well as new dynamics of dispossession for Acadian entrepreneurs. For example, the shipyards of local Acadian entrepreneurs such as John F. Deveau and Jules Robicheau were fully expropriated or leased for the duration of the war, often by large, anglophone conglomerates such as the Meteghan Shipbuilding Company.[70] Local fishers were not immune to these developments either, as the Acadian fish plant of L.H. Comeau & Sons had their fishing grounds compulsorily vacated in 1940

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[65] Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians,* 94; Harold Robichaud Collection Centre Acadien, Series B, documented attached to photo 15. Notably, these sawmills regularly exported their goods to the West Indies, New England, and Europe.
[66] Ross and Deveau, *The Acadians,* 94.
[67] Neil Boucher, "L'émigration et les Acadiens : le cas des acadiens du sud-ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse," *Revue de l'Université Sainte-Anne* 21, (1995): 23.
[68] P. M. Dagnaud, *Les Français du Sud-Ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse* (Besancon, France: Librairie Centrale, 1905), 255-256.
[69] The A.F. Theriault and Sons Shipbuilding yard in Meteghan River constructed several large freighters and sardine fishing vessels throughout the 1940s, the latter of which were usually exported to the islands of Grand Manan, off the coast of New Brunswick. Rob Gorham, "Working with its Clients," *The Chronicle Herald*, April 12, 1986.
[70] Deveau, *La Ville Française,* 102-103. Meteghan Shipbuilding Company had been contracted by the Canadian Navy to build warships in 1940.

to accommodate warship berthing.[71] Nevertheless, the growth of the shipbuilding industry in wartime Meteghan not only created five hundred new jobs, but also introduced the local workforce to cutting edge shipbuilding equipment, techniques, and technologies.[72] Following the exodus of the warship building industry in 1946, Meteghan was left with a highly specialized and qualified workforce, directly initiating a new wave of local industrial expansion and diversification.[73]

By the end of the 1940s, although culturally vulnerable, the economic outlook for Clare's Acadian fishing communities was decidedly strong. The well-known Acadian lobster-fishing brothers from Saulnierville, Bernadin and Clarence Comeau, opened Comeau Seafoods Ltd. in 1946, and later spearheaded the expansion of Nova Scotia's scallop fishing industry during the late 1950s.[74] A strong partnership developed between the Acadian proprietors of A.F. Theriault and Sons Shipbuilding yard and Comeau Seafoods during the 1960s, evidently to the benefit of both industrial sectors.[75] However, there was still a great deal of vulnerability for working-class residents. By the start of the 1962 season, Argyle was home to approximately 983, the vast majority of whom were classified as "part time" or "occasional" fishers by the federal Dominion Bureau of Statistics.[76] A similar demographic was found in Clare, reportedly home to approximately 204, and fifty-five part time fishers in 1962.[77] Given part time and occasional fishers only worked for five to ten months of the calendar year, many of the region's residents were forced to find alternative employment during

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[71] Deveau, *La Ville Française,* 102-103.
[72] Deveau, *La Ville Française,* 102-103; Thériault, "Tradition orale des pêcheurs," 207. Workers at Meteghan's shipyards constructed an impressive twelve minesweepers, twenty barges, and two trawlers between 1940 and 1946.
[73] Daniel W. MacInnes, *A Profile of the Municipality of Clare, Digby County, Nova Scotia* (Halifax: Institute for Resource and Environmental Studies, Dalhousie University, 1982), 11.
[74] Rob Gorham, "Clare's largest employer," *The Chronicle Herald*, April 12, 1986.
[75] Rob Gorham, "Working with its clients," *The Chronicle Herald*, April 12, 1986.
[76] Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Fisheries Section, *Fisheries Statistics* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1965), 15.
[77] Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Fisheries Statistics*, 15.

the summer months.[78] By 1968, the commercial fishing industry was flourishing in Clare and Argyle, but its future impacts on localized dynamics of Acadian (dis)empowerment remained unknown.

Although the exact economic and cultural history of Clare and Argyle's Acadian fishing communities are somewhat different, the associative networks between the two regions proved influential to the ways in which Acadian cultural and economic capital were exchanged throughout history, as well as how Acadianité was regionally expressed and consolidated. Notably, the Acadians of Clare and Argyle were almost entirely isolated from other francophone communities until the early twentieth century yet had a plethora of English fishing communities around them. This isolation served to strengthen the two regions' cultural and economic ties, as well as led to the emergence of a uniquely Acadian fishing sector. Long before the "réveil" of the late 1960s, the fisheries had already made substantial contributions to the localized Acadian economy and plight for cultural preservation. Yet, there was still a great deal of change on the horizon. What exactly did the economic, social, and cultural future of Clare and Argyle look like?

Y a-t-il de l'espoir pour les Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse ?

By the mid twentieth century, the socio-economic lifestyle of Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia appeared highly paradoxical. As entrepreneurs began to abandon their longstanding egalitarian approach to doing business in favour of more liberal economics, simultaneously, the Acadian population remained unwaveringly communal in their conceptualization of themselves and the world around them. Writing in 1961, Acadian historian René LeBlanc argued that "Plus peut-être que nombres des autres régions d'Acadie, la Baie St-Marie donne l'impression d'avoir

[78] Specifically, part-time fishers were classified as those who worked between five and ten months a year, while occasional fishers were those who worked less than five. Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Fisheries Statistics*, 5.

conscience d'être un peuple différent, ayant à entretenir des rapports humains d'un ordre particulier. Sentiment latent plus que conviction pratique, je veux bien, ce sentiment sert pourtant de tremplin à l'action."[79] This sentiment was shared by other historians of the period including Marc-Adélard Tremblay, who went on the argue that the true risk of social disintegration in Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia was the imposition of "les valeurs nouvelles qui viennent de l'extérieur et qui posent de multiples interrogations à la légitimité de la culture acadienne, aux prémisses sur lesquelles elle est fondée et aux objectifs qu'elle poursuit."[80] With the Acadian neo-nationalist movement on the horizon, Tremblay's prediction would indeed prove to be true.

As the first half of the twentieth century brought rapid industrialization, modernization, and urbanization to Canada's Maritime provinces, many Acadian communities began to experience even greater rates of emigration and assimilation.[81] Numerous Acadian fisher families from Clare and Argyle emigrated to New England during the interwar period, primarily to be closer to the Boston fish market. This move often afforded more work opportunities to Acadians and bettered their standards of paternal care, reducing the amount of time male fishers had to spend at sea.[82] Approximately 350 Acadians emigrated from Wedgeport to the greater Boston area during the 1920s and 1930s.[83] According to a 1924 report by the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, Morris Island was

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[79] René LeBlanc, "Les Acadiens à la Baie Sainte-Marie," *L'Action Nationale* 50, no. 8 (1961): 735.
[80] Tremblay, "Les Acadiens de la Baie Française," 553.
[81] Appendix two of the November 1977 issue of *L'Action Nationale* titled "Aujourd'hui Acadie" provides insight into the rates of Acadian assimilation across New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia during the 1960s and early 1970s, accounting for both ethnicity and mother tongue census data. According to the article, the Acadians of Prince Edward Island were assimilating at an average rate of 51.9%, the Acadians of Nova Scotia at a rate of 50.9%, and the Acadians of New Brunswick at a rate of 8.2%. The lower assimilation rates in New Brunswick were evidently due to the major political gains and linguistic protections the population had been afforded under the Robichaud government. See "Annexe II: Données géographiques et démographiques," *L'Action Nationale* 67, no. 3-4 (1977): 328-331, https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3531748?docsearchtext=L%E2%80%99Action%20nationale%201977.
[82] Neil Boucher, *The Development of an Acadian Village: Surette's Island 1859-1970* (Yarmouth: Lescarbot Press, 1980), 66-67. During the interwar period, it was common for fishers to leave their home for up to six months on end and trade with Boston merchants / fish buyers.
[83] Boucher, *The Development of an Acadian Village*, 66.

"almost deserted… with whole families moving to the United States."[84] Concurrently, new roads were paved, cars were imported, and schooner-based fishing fleets fell out of fashion as the coastal landscape of Clare and Argyle's Acadian fishing communities continued to change.[85]

There was a growing sense of cultural heterogeneity among the Acadians during the early twentieth century, and emigration was only perpetuating the problem. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, members of the Acadian elite began to recognize this sentiment and decided that a complete overhaul of their traditional nationalist rhetoric was in order. From their point of view, it was clear that the unity of Acadian society prior to the 1950s was largely attributable to the population's collective isolation from the Anglo-Saxon world as a largely rural, illiterate, and highly religious people.[86] In order to keep Acadian nationalism alive and well at a time when the social, cultural, and geographic cohesion of their communities was increasingly difficult to maintain, the elite decided to modify their nationalist discourse to reflect the Acadian's current socio-economic reality. As the Acadians were still largely without access to French radio or television stations, those writing for *L'Évangéline* began to perpetuate historical myths, producing idealized images of the collective's history that highlighted the superiority of rural life as compared to the evils of urban living.[87] Concurrently, Acadian politicians and neo-nationalists facilitated the emergence of economic liberalism in New Brunswick, emboldening Acadian participation in economic and political spheres, hoping to initiate a full integration into the state apparatus.[88] Upon the election of New Brunswick's first Acadian Premier Louis Robichaud in 1960, the Acadians began to fully reconceptualize their

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[84] "Educational Report," *Journals of the House of Assembly* 1, (1924): 74-75, cited in Boucher, *The Development of an Acadian Village,* 66.
[85] Boucher, *The Development of an Acadian Village*, 72; Alphonse Deveau, "Clare : cent ans d'histoire socio-économique," *Revue de l'Université Sainte-Anne* 32, (1979): 4-9.
[86] Belliveau, "Canadian Liberal Order," 62-63; Richard, "Le discours idéologique," 73-87.
[87] Daigle, "Le nationalisme acadien," 83-86.
[88] Joel Belliveau, "Considérations économiques et (re)constitution du « nous » acadien à l'heure de la naissance du néo-nationalisme (1968-1972)," *Revue du Nouvel-Ontario*, no. 38 (2013): 47, https://doi.org/10.7202/1023658ar.

historic position, capacity, and circumstance as an ethno-linguistic minority.[89] In the words of Pierre Trépanier, a contemporary French Canadian nationalist and history professor at the Université de Moncton, Robichaud's election fostered a newfound desire *and* ability among the Acadians to "affronter des problèmes collectifs autrement que par des initiatives individuelles, en mettant à contribution l'État et sa puissance."[90]

However, the Acadian neo-nationalist movement was laden with ideological divisions from its onset, as community leaders argued over whether it was time for the Acadians to join the province of Quebec, continue to advocate for localized change, or establish their own autonomous Acadian government. Intergenerational tensions flared particularly high, as Acadian university students in New Brunswick quite literally dragged the symbols and narratives put forth by traditional nationalists through the mud, lighting the Acadian national flag on fire during a protest at the Université de Moncton in 1966, formally "retiring" it at a demonstration at College-St. Joseph, and even adding a hammer and sickle to its blue stripe as a rejection of nationalistic Acadianité.[91] At the Université Sainte-Anne, Acadian students launched their own nine-day strike in December of 1968 after hearing the news that their college's main campus might be relocated to the English town of Yarmouth.[92] Notably, Sainte-Anne's student and teacher associations formed a united front during the strike, insisting that moving the university out of francophone territory posed a great threat to the longstanding, harmonious relationship between Southwest Nova Scotia's two Acadian regions.[93] Fortunately, the provincial government was swift to intervene, and decided that the university was to

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[89]Roger Ouellette, "L'émergence et le nationalisme," in *Lectures de l'Acadie : une anthologie de textes en sciences humaines et sociales*, ed. Ali-Khodia, Mourad and Annette Boudreau (Montréal : Éditions Fides, 2009), 367; Clarence LeBreton, *Le Nationalism Acadien 1891-1981: Un siècle du lute* (Halifax: Saint Mary's University, 1981), 22.
[90] Pierre Trépanier, "Aujourd'hui l'Acadie," *L'Action Nationale* 67, no. 3-4 (1977): 183.
[91] LeBreton, *Un siècle du lute*, 14; Perry Biddiscombe, "Le Tricolore et l'étoile: The Origin of the Acadian National Flag, 1867-1912," *Acadiensis* 20, no. 1 (1990): 145, https://www.jstor.org/stable/30303361.
[92] Poplyansky, "Le moment 68," 123.
[93] Poplyansky, "Le moment 68," 123.

remain in Church Point.[94] As argued by Acadian historian Michael Poplyansky, the 1968 student strike at Sainte-Anne highlights the burgeoning disparity between neo-nationalist sentiment in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.[95] Unlike students from the Université de Moncton, who leveraged their immediate geographic circumstances to advance alternative nationalist ideologies during their strike, students at the Université Sainte-Anne were completely committed to the simple question of the college's relocation. In other words, the student strike at Sainte-Anne is better characterized as a community solidarity movement than an overt mobilization of Acadian neo-nationalism. This further demonstrates the localizing propensity of Acadian nationalism, identity, and community action in Southwest Nova Scotia. The student strike at Sainte-Anne highlights how the everyday circumstances of Acadian life were of primary concern in the region, evocative of Patrick Clarke's observation that "Les acadiens des milieux ruraux et des communautés de pêche en particulier, moins enclins à intérioriser les représentations identitaires élitistes, ont conservé une identité qui, même teintée de nationalisme idéologique demeurait une expression authentiquement populaire. Des vécus divergents, découlant de deux réalités, ont permis l'apparition de deux identités communautaires distinctes."[96]

One of the most noteworthy projects to emerge during the neo-nationalist movement was the politicization of Acadian territoriality. As debates circulated about the potential union of the Maritime provinces and Quebec's independence movement accelerated, various Acadian activists began to assert their belief that the imagined and structural future of Acadie was only possible within the province of New Brunswick.[97] This ideology was famously taken up by the Parti Acadien (PA), a short lived Acadian separatist party that succeeded in nominating several candidates to New

[94] To help resolve the crisis, the provincial government appointed an investigative committee chaired by David Munroe, assistant to the Principal of McGill University. See Poplyansky, "Le moment 68," 123.
[95] Poplyansky, "Le moment 68," 123.
[96] Clarke, Pêche et identité, 88.
[97] Ouellette, "L'émergence et le nationalisme," 367.

Brunswick's provincial legislature during the 1970s.[98] However, the sentiment extended beyond the confines of the PA, and was even present in Southwest Nova Scotia. For example, Paul Comeau, a professor from the Université Sainte-Anne argued in a 1982 *Égalité* article that:

> Si nous voulons nous intéresser sérieusement à cette question d'organisation politique et territoriale, ma participation comme Acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse, appelé à vivre dans une Acadie abstraite . . . ne peut se résumer qu'à un message de quasi-fiction, voire folklorique. Ceux qui voudront m'accuser de paranoïa et de négativisme pourront le faire, mais le point de vue que j'essaierai de vous faire comprendre durant ces quelques minutes provient d'une réflexion basée sur une réalité qui ne peut échapper à ceux qui vivent dans un pays qui ne leur appartient pas ou encore dans une Acadie fictive qui leur est louée selon les conditions du locateur.[99]

Accordingly, there is no one conceptualization of Acadian neo-nationalism in ideology or action, although there are some key characteristics that generally define the movement across time and place. Historian Léon Thériault has defined the movement's ideological continuity as follows: "d'accroître leur contrôle sur des facteurs influençant leur avenir collectif: rouages administratifs plus représentatifs des Acadiens et des Acadiennes, statut officiel pour la langue française, institutions culturelles plus dynamiques, cohésion communautaire et développement économique."[100] The ways in which these ideas or aspirations were crystallized into collective action are substantially varied throughout the movement's history. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the Acadians of Nova Scotia were discursively distanced from the neo-nationalist movement, sometimes at the hand of their own elite. Of the same token, the nationalization of several industries and institutions in Quebec and New Brunswick called into question the Acadian's liberal "illusion of autonomy" and "bonne

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[98] The Parti Acadien was founded in 1972 and was disbanded in 1986. One of the PA's primary goals was "la division de la province du Nouveau-Brunswick en deux entités." For a concise summary of the PA's ideology, see Luc Léger, "L'image du Parti acadien et de son projet autonomiste dans le journal *L'Évangéline*," *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, no. 45-46 (2012): 91-92, https://doi.org/10.7202/1009896ar.

[99] Paul Comeau, "Y a-t-il de l'espoir pour les Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse?" *Égalité, revue acadienne d'analyse politique,* no. 6, (1982): 147-152.

[100] Léon Thériault, "Acadia from 1763 to 1990: A Historical Synthesis," in *Acadia of the Maritimes: Thematic Studies from the Beginning to the Present*, ed. Jean Daigle (Moncton: Chaire d'études acadiennes, 1995), 81.

entente" model that were previously viewed as the only viable way to maintain cultural and economic specificity.[101]

This chapter has demonstrated how and why the amalgamated Acadian territory of Southwest Nova Scotia serves as a dynamic setting for this study on the specificity of Acadianité vis à vis occupation and space. For one, the Southwest region exemplifies the idea that Acadian history, culture, and society is "bien ancrée dans un territoire et vécue au quotidien."[102] Additionally, Acadian identity in the region is closely tied to the exploitation of the sea for the purposes of livelihood, social connection, and capital gain. By the end of the 1960s, the Acadian fisher families of Southwest Nova Scotia were a people on the fringe of a powerful industrial state and an independent, progressivist cultural movement. Their population was seen as culturally weak and bound to assimilate, while their territory was perceived as the economic, cultural, and occupational hinterland of their own province. This chapter, which has explored the unique imbrication between culture, place, and livelihood in Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia prior to 1970, serves to contextualize how and why the fisheries were primed to emerge as an instrument of collective development for the region's Acadian population during the late twentieth century.

[101] Belliveau, "Canadian Liberal Order," 65.
[102] Michelle Landry, Pépin-Filion Dominique, and Julien Massicotte, eds. *L'état De L'acadie : Un Grand Tour D'horizon De L'acadie Contemporaine* (Montreal, Quebec: Del Busso Éditeur, 2021), 7.

Chapter 2

Economic and Ecological Specificity: A Different Kettle of Fish

By the early 1970s, there was an overarching desire among the Acadians to participate in broader political and economic spheres, hoping to someday initiate the total integration of Acadian institutions and culture into localized state apparatuses.[1] While these ambitions were often realized at a provincial level in New Brunswick, the economic and political achievements of Nova Scotia's Acadian population remained largely contingent upon the isolated actions of individuals and non-state institutions throughout the mid-to-late twentieth century. Any desire to transmute New Brunswick's successful brand of economic nationalism across provincial borders appeared to be an increasingly futile endeavour, as the popularity of the FANE continued to wane, the future of the Université Sainte-Anne remained unsure, and regional underdevelopment persisted. Despite these historical circumstances, there was still one institution primed to emerge as the definitive stronghold for Acadian economic specificity, territoriality, and achievement in Southwest Nova Scotia — the commercial fisheries.

This chapter explores the economic structure of Clare and Argyle's foremost Acadian fishing communities during the late twentieth century. The use of the term "economic" draws upon the work of historian Jean-Claude Dupont, who defines the concept as "l'avantage tiré de l'utilisation d'un environnement physique, ici, la mer, dans la formation d'un genre de vie traditionnel : ou encore, l'art d'adopter un lieu géographique et d'en retirer un apport de valeur pour la culture matérielle et populaire d'une civilisation donnée."[2] With Dupont's interpretation in mind, this chapter looks at how the economic activities of Southwest Nova Scotia's Acadian population

[1] Belliveau, "Considérations économiques et (re)constitution du nous," 48.
[2] Dupont, "L'Influence de la mer," 32.

influenced its overall position, capacity, and circumstances at a time when its interaction with the state was rapidly increasing.

The first section details how fisheries management regimes, global market trends, and conservation-based acts of bureaucracy influenced the evolution of the Southwest Shore's commercial fishing industry during the 1970s and 1980s. Specifically, this section analyzes how the Acadian fishers and their various fisher associations responded and adapted to changes imposed by outside forces, providing insight into how the political efficacy, social, and cultural adaption of the Acadian fishers related to that of the Acadians more broadly. The second section looks at economic specificity of Southwest Nova Scotia's commercial fishing industry during the mid-to-late twentieth century. Here, the average landings, values landed, and overall fisher involvement in Clare and Argyle's six Acadian fishing communities are compared to those of the Southwest Shore's anglophone fishing communities. The final section revisits the Acadian fishing communities of Clare and Argyle, surveying each region's (im)material economic structures to determine the overall embeddedness of the Acadian fishing industry. To add further nuance, special attention is devoted in this section to the dynamic relationship between fishing and Francophonie, entrepreneurship, gender, and social connectedness. Collectively, this chapter demonstrates how a unique set of imbricated economic, political, and ecological factors ultimately abetted the Acadians' ability to modernize their modes of production and accumulate capital during the neo-nationalist period. In doing so, this chapter sets the stage for future discussions on the ways in which regional economic structures associated with the fisheries altered, created, or impinged upon the dynamic social identifiers and regional expressions of Acadianité endemic to Clare and Argyle's late twentieth century Acadian fishing communities.

Achaler! Hucher! Boloxer! Government Reforms, Response, and Critique[3]

The fishers of Southwest Nova Scotia developed a distinct disposition in the late twentieth century, known for their rugged individualism, strong sense of justice, and aversion to outsiders. A slew of contemporary government reports and news articles capture how the region's fishers were a group of disputatious faultfinders and contrarians when put in dialogue with government officials, politicians, and union organizers, often ascribed their own regulatory footnotes and supplemental consultations in response.[4] However, for the Acadians, this interactive tenacity was rarely accompanied by an appeal to legal or rational arguments, nor the organization of strategic action. Instead, there was a collective propensity among fishers to simply ignore or "work around" or ignore regulations they deemed to be unfair or superfluous.[5] On an organizational level, several large fisheries unions repeatedly failed to recruit Acadian fishers from Southwest Nova Scotia during the 1970s.[6] The region's Acadian fishers remained strongly attached to their localized associations throughout the decade, as well as the charismatic individuals who managed them. Evidently, at a time when the position, capacity, and stamina of the Acadian ethno-cultural collective in Southwest

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[3] Achaler, hucher and boloxer are uniquely Acadian French verbs, however — like many Acadian expressions — they are occasionally found in regional dialects of Quebec French. Achaler means to bother or pester, often used in the reflexive (ex: "Il s'achale après mois") to indicate pursuing or harassing someone. Hucher means to shout something loudly from a distance (ex: "Huche après lui pour qu'il s'en vienne"), and is an older Acadian word mainly used as by hunters today. Boloxer is a near cognate of the English expression "to bollix" and is defined similarly, meaning to confuse, disrupt, or unsettle. Pascal Poirier, *Le Glossaire acadien,* Édition critique de Pierre M. Gérin (Moncton: Éditions d'Acadie; Moncton: Centre d'études acadiennes, 1993), 17, 256.

[4] For example, a 1975 report by the Canadian Lobster Fishery Task Force notes "However, there was general agreement, excepting at some meetings in southwestern Nova Scotia, that persons who are fully employed and earning reasonable incomes outside fishing should not be permitted to fish lobsters." Canada, Fisheries and Marine Services, Lobster Fishery Task Force, *Lobster Fishery Task Force: Final Report March 1975* (Ottawa: Lobster Fishery Task Force, 1975), 73. For specific examples of how Southwestern fishers critiqued government officials, see several articles published in *Le Courrier* during March 1974, April 1975, as well as June and July of 1981.

[5] Flint, "The Lobster Fishery," 136; Bodiguel, "Origins of Illegal Strategies," 272. This concept will be fully parsed out.

[6] Clement, *The Struggle to Organize,* 146; Calhoun, *A Word to Say,* 104-108; Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries, *Fishermen's Collective Bargaining: Alternatives* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries, 1981), 5.

Nova Scotia was increasingly subjugated to outsider imposition and judgement, so were the conditions of their work.

To begin, it is useful to first introduce the most prominent fisheries management philosophies and regulatory regimes of the period, as well as the circumstances behind their implementation. As defined by the DFO, the term fisheries management refers to "the control or regulation of the actions of the participants in the industry in order to achieve some predetermined objective or set of objectives."[7] Accordingly, fisheries management encompasses "biological, economic, and social considerations" as well as "political and administrative considerations," although these elements were not treated equally at certain moments in time.[8] For the purposes of this thesis, exploring the bureaucratic side of the fishing industry provides valuable insight into how the contemporary mentality, motivations, and actions of Clare and Argyle's Acadian fishers related to the nature and frequency of their interactions with the state.

During the mid-twentieth century, the Canadian state's approach to fisheries management was primarily guided by the framework that fish were a common property resource every individual had a privileged right to access, and that any infringement upon that right was to be only for the purposes of resource conservation.[9] In other words, the amount of government oversight dictating when, where, and how fish could be harvested in Canada around the time of the Second World War fluctuated depending on the specific year, province, community, and fishery.[10] It was common for

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[7] Canada, *Lobster Fishery Task Force,* 29.
[8] Canada, *Lobster Fishery Task Force,* 29.
[9] Clotilde Bodiguel, "Fishermen facing the commercial lobster fishery licensing policy in the Canadian Maritime Provinces: Origins of illegal strategies, 1960-2000," *Marine Policy* 26, no. 4 (2002): 272, doi:10.1016/S0308-597X(02)00009-X; Barrett, "Bankrupt Government Policies," 115. The federal Department of Fisheries was the administrative and governing body for the fisheries sector from 1930-1969. For the purposes of "consolidate[ing] the administration and management of Canada's renewable resources," the Trudeau government dismantled the Department of Fisheries in 1969 and created the Department of Fisheries and Forestry (DFF) in its place. The DFF would be integrated into the Department of Environment in 1971. Flint, "The Lobster Fishery," 136, 138.
[10] Between 1930 and 1939, the Canadian government strongly regulated the commercial fisheries. Policies contrived during this period were designed to balance the interests of "economic" corporate fisheries and "social" small boat fisheries during the Great Depression. There was also an increased supply of fish on international markets due to mechanization, and a simultaneous decline in demand due to the ongoing economic recession. As economic and social

fishers from rural regions such as Clare and Argyle to develop informal codes of conduct and decision-making processes to guide their communal fishing efforts and assure everyone was able to secure a moderate livelihood. Notably, these sorts of informal management regimes were not wildly different from those put forth by the state during the 1970s, as they also tended to define the parameters of specific fishing grounds, regulate certain aspects of exploitative behaviours, and spell out behavioural expectations.[11] In rural communities, this model of localized fisheries governance fostered both a great sense of social solidarity among fishers as well as strong suspicions towards unfamiliar institutions and individuals. As various forms of external management began to penetrate the Atlantic fisheries during the latter half of the twentieth century, they were often dismissed as unnecessary and unwarranted by small-scale rural fishers.

It wasn't until the close of the Second World War that federal and provincial governments began to fully reform and modernize their approach to fisheries management.[12] From the early 1950s to the late 1970s, the federal government implemented several "Fordist" reforms in the fisheries sector that privileged the expansion of industrial trade and integrated a "bio-economical model of scientific analysis."[13] Put more plainly, it was at this time that the Canadian state began to recognize the importance of structurally balancing resource conservation, modern capitalism, and the economic welfare of fishers in their approach to fisheries management. This mid-century "Fordist" model was operationalized as advanced and elaborate licensing regimes, catch quotas, entry limits, fleet modernization projects, shipbuilding subsidies, and fishing districts and seasons.[14]

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conditions improved across Canada during the Second World War, the government began to adopt a more "laissez-faire" approach. Apostle, *Challenges to Modernity*, 29, 47.

[11] Victor Thiessen and Anthony Davis, "Recruitment to Small Boat Fishing and Public Policy in the Atlantic Canadian Fisheries," *Canadian Review of Sociology* 25, no. 4 (1988): 626, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1755-618X.1988.tb00122.x. For example, it was common sense to avoid interfering with another man's gear, entering another man's fishing grounds, or selling undersized lobster to a local market.

[12] Apostle, *Challenges to Modernity*, 177.

[13] Apostle, *Challenges to Modernity*, 117, 154.

[14] Apostle, *Challenges to Modernity*, 74, 92-94; Bodiguel, "Origins of Illegal Strategies," 272.

The 1950s through to the 1970s also saw the introduction of new "social tools" for fisheries management, designed to improve the economic welfare of fishers.[15] Memorable examples include the federal government's broadening and extension of unemployment insurance coverage to include independent fishers, as well as the Nova Scotia government's restructuring of the Fishermen's Loan Board to promote inshore fleet modernization.[16] Both of these initiatives were particularly well received by the Acadian fishers of Clare and Argyle. For example, a 1979 article published in *The Globe and Mail* captures the excitement, contentment, and sense of security the federal government's annual unemployment cheques had afforded the Acadian fishers of West Pubnico since the late 1950s.[17] Seasonal fishers like Donald Doucette, who worked approximately ten months of the calendar year, were able to collect upwards of $1,900 from the government during the 1960s and 1970s, supplementing other off-season income. [18] The reliability of this revenue allowed for fishers like Doucette and his brother to accumulate large amounts of capital, as well as avoid the dangers of offshore fishing during the unforgiving North Atlantic winters. By claiming federal unemployment insurance and borrowing from the Fishermen's Loan Board, the Doucette brothers were able to purchase a $210,000, forty-five-foot-long fishing vessel in 1978, all the while "staying home reading books, watching snowflakes glance off the windowpane and collecting unemployment insurance when the shoreline starts freezing and the sea gets wild."[19] However, the Doucette brothers were not alone. As recorded in the archives of the Nova Scotia Fishermen's Loan Board fleet modernization division, only four of the program's forty-two total loan recipients between 1954 and 1972 did not

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[15] Bodiguel, "Origins of Illegal Strategies," 272.
[16] Specifically, unemployment insurance was broadened to include independent fishers in 1956, and unemployment benefits for fishers were extended to the winter months (i.e., the fishers slowest season) in 1959. The introduction of access limits was also viewed as a "social tool" to improve the economic welfare of fishers. Bodiguel, "Origins of Illegal Strategies," 272.
[17] Barbara Yaffe, "Well-off Fishermen Draw Jobless Cheques as a Gift," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, ON), October 26, 1977, 9, https://www.proquest.com/docview/1239281936/DE3E62EE0ED3467BPQ/1?accountid=12339.
[18] Yaffe, "Well-off Fishermen," 9.
[19] Yaffe, "Well-off Fishermen," 9.

bear an Acadian surname.[20] Of the same token, only three of the applicants lived outside of the six Acadian fishing villages examined in this thesis.[21]

While the popularity of these two initiatives in Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia seemingly indicates a great deal of financial need in the region, the opposite was often true. For example, fishers like the Doucette brothers often reported an average annual income of $18,000 to $26,000 during the 1970s and 1980s.[22] In 1981, when the average annual income of Nova Scotian households rested at around $21,000, the Acadian fishers of West Pubnico were simultaneously raking in more than $29,000 a year, on average.[23] To put these values into perspective, the annual revenue of West Pubnico's Acadian fishers in 1979 has an equivalent purchasing power of more than $100,000 in 2023.[24] Certain journalists, citizens, and government officials even accused the Acadian fishers of Southwest Nova Scotia of "abusing" the unemployment insurance program throughout the 1970s, but local recipients often saw no issue with their claims, stating "It's legal. Everyone does it. I don't think anyone feels guilty."[25]

During the early Fordist period, the changing dynamics and demands of the east coast lobster fishery were of key concern for state officials. As Canada's longstanding trawler restrictions

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[20] Nova Scotia Archives, Fishermen's Loan Board Fonds, Fishermen's Loan Board Shelf List, RG 84. The only individuals bearing non-Acadian surnames on the list are Paul Goodwin of Argyle Sound, Louis McCauley of Meteghan, George Prouty of Pubnico, and Ernest Adams of East Pubnico.

[21] Nova Scotia Archives, Fishermen's Loan Board Fonds, Fishermen's Loan Board Shelf List, RG 84. In total, there were thirteen applicants from Meteghan, fifteen from Wedgeport, eight from Lower West Pubnico, and one applicant each from SAR, Church Point, and Saulnierville.

[22] Barbara Yaffe's 1979 *Globe and Mail* article lists the Doucette brother's annual income at approximately $26,000. Yaffe, "Well-off Fishermen," 9. A quantitative analysis of Janice Raymond's 1985 report on the fishing communities of the Southwest Shore indicates that Acadian fishers from Clare and Argyle reported an average annual income of $19,000 in 1981, equalling an equivalent purchasing power in 2023 of nearly $80,000. Raymond, *Fishing Community Profiles,* 258-264 and 304-316; Bank of Canada and Statistics Canada, "Consumer Price Indexes for Canada Data Calculator," accessed September 30, 2023, https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/.

[23] Raymond, *Fishing Community Profiles,* 258-264 and 304-316; Yaffe, "Well-off Fishermen," 9.

[24] Bank of Canada and Statistics Canada, "Consumer Price Indexes for Canada Data Calculator," accessed September 30, 2023, https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/.

[25] Yaffe, "Well-off Fishermen," 9. This quote was from Donald Doucette. T.W. O'Connell, the regional manager of benefit programs for the federal Department of Employment and Immigration called the fisher's unemployment claims "...a mismanagement, an abuse of public funds," while a fisher's wife interviewed in Gaffe's article stated "To tell you the God's truth, I wouldn't have had the nerve to take my UI cheque to cash it around here. The people know my husband makes a good living." Yaffe, "Well-off Fishermen," 9.136

were lifted, lobster fishers from the Maritime provinces became increasingly concerned about possible damage to their gear, harvest, and fishing grounds.[26] Of the same token, ground fishers began to feel as though the wide-spread and stationary nature of lobster trapping was interfering with their large-scale modes of production.[27] The rapid expansion of the United States offshore lobster fishery between 1955 and 1971 raised further concern among inshore fishers and sellers, who feared that their stocks and markets could be adversely affected.[28] These emergent anxieties were then compounded by the rise of "moonlighters" in the inshore lobster fishery, an invented term for individuals who held full-time jobs but fished in their spare time.[29] Although occupational plurality and part-time fishing had been the norm in most rural areas, those who identified with a new specialized category of "professional: lobster fishers were especially displeased with this practice as moonlighters tended to frequent their already overcrowded and increasingly trawled over grounds.[30]

Although these sorts of regulatory anxieties were expressed by lobster fishers from across the Atlantic provinces during the 1960s and 1970s, exploring how those hailing from Southwest Nova Scotia expressed their concerns with the industry's contemporary volatility provides further insight into the region's unique economic paradigm. Following the 1971 collapse of the Nova Scotia swordfishing industry, 350 of the region's offshore fishers were suddenly left without access to a primary means of livelihood, initiating a mass exodus of offshore fishers to the region's already over-crowded herring, scallop, and lobster fisheries.[31] To mitigate the impacts of vessel displacement, the

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[26] Canada, *Lobster Fishery Task Force*, 51, 100-102. Fishers were also concerned about the introduction of new gillnetting, moss raking, and scallop dragging technologies.
[27] Canada, *Lobster Fishery Task Force*, 51; Apostle, *Emptying their Nets*, 48.
[28] Canada, *Lobster Fishery Task Force*, 154-160.
[29] Flint, "The Lobster Fishery," 136; Canada, *Lobster Fishery Task Force*, 66.
[30] Flint, "The Lobster Fishery," 136; Canada, *Lobster Fishery Task Force*, 66.
[31] "Et maintenant...le gros poisson," *Le Courrier*, February 11, 1971, 4; Nick Fillmore, "Dispute over mercury in swordfish," *The Globe and Mail*, December 30, 1972, 8. In 1971, several American researchers reported that most swordfish sold on the North Atlantic market were highly contaminated by mercury, often at levels exceeding those thought to be safe for human consumption. In response to these findings, the Canadian government prohibited the sale of swordfish with mercury levels exceeding 0.5ppm in 1971, resulting in a near total abandonment of the industry. See J.F. Caddy, *A Review of Some Factors Relevant to Management of Swordfish Fisheries in the Northwest Atlantic* (St. Andrews N.B.: Biological Station, Research and Development Directorate, 1976), 2; P.C.F Hurley and T.D. Iles. *A Review of the Canadian*

federal government approved the establishment of an offshore, year round lobster fishery in Southwest Nova Scotia during August of that same year.[32] The boundaries of this new fishery extended approximately sixty kilometres further than that of the well-established inshore lobster fishery, and licenses were only issued to fishers who had previously worked in the region's now defunct swordfishing industry.[33] However, inshore lobster fishers vehemently opposed the government's decision, arguing that the year-round nature of the offshore fishery encouraged heavy landings bound to destroy their established markets, grounds, and stock.[34] There was "no closed season on protest" in 1971, as nearly 2,500 of the Southwestern Fishermen's Association protested outside of the Nova Scotia Fishermen's Exhibition in Lunenburg during Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau's visit, and local leaders of the Acadian fishing industry Martin Cottreau (Cottreau's Boat Shop), Vernon d'Éon (d'Éon Lobster Plugs) and Allen d'Éon (d'Éon's Fish Market) of West Pubnico penned a personal letter to the federal government asking that the offshore season opening be postponed.[35]

However, the true impacts of the offshore lobster fishery proved to be negligible in terms of resource conservation. The 1975 report by the Canadian Lobster Fishery Task Force concluded that no illegal activity had been committed by offshore fishers in the years following its establishment, adding that inshore lobster prices had been the highest on record.[36] Nevertheless, tensions between inshore and offshore fishers remained high on the Southwest Shore as a new threat loomed on the horizon.

Swordfish Fishery (Dartmouth, NS: Canadian Atlantic Fisheries Scientific Advisory Committee and Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 1980), 1-5; and "Discuss Mercury Contamination," *Nova Scotia Fisheries Newsletter* 4, no. 3 (February 1971): 1.

[32] Canada, *Lobster Fishery Task Force*, 155.

[33] Canada, *Lobster Fishery Task Force*, 156.

[34] "Payments Made to 59 Owners," *Nova Scotia Fisheries Newsletter* 5, no. 1 (July 1971): 2

[35] Lyndon Watkins, "Atlantic tour by PM reported time for fishermen's protests," *The Globe and Mail*, July 28, 1971, 8.; "Yarmouth et Shelburne veulent retarder l'ouverture de la pêche au homard," *Le Courrier,* September 30, 1971, 1.

[36] Canada, *Lobster Fishery Task Force*, 155.

Although it was not unusual for local fishers to see the occasional American lobster trap in their waters, the total number of foreign traps in the area began to rise during the early 1970s, reaching an all-time high of nearly five thousand in July of 1972.[37] The Acadian fishers of Clare and Argyle took particular issue with the fact that their livelihood was being "menacé par cet envahissement," despite the fact that most of the traps were legally placed outside of Canada's 12-mile limit.[38] In an October 1972 editorial published in *Le Courrier* alongside the cartoon featured below (figure four), Cyrille LeBlanc captured the contemporary mentality of the Acadian lobster fishers who had begun to cut American traps:

> Le pêcheur pratique son métier individuellement et de façon compétitive. D'après lui s'il ne prend pas le poisson aujourd'hui, son voisin le prendra demain. Le pêcheur ne se sent pas totalement responsable du problème et attend l'action des gouvernements. Nous pouvons comprendre la situation du pêcheur et nous considérons la protection de la pêche la responsabilité des gouvernements. Il est d'ailleurs impossible aux pêcheurs canadiens de négocier avec les pêcheurs étrangers qui sont plus nombreux qu'eux au large des côtes canadiennes. Il est également impossible pour un pêcheur d'empêcher son voisin de prendre la quantité de poisson qu'il peut…Les politiciens agissent jamais ou rarement si l'opinion publique ne les oblige pas…Le temps d'imposer des lois sévères est maintenant. Demain il sera trop tard.[39]

[37] Cyrille LeBlanc, "Bateaux américains pêchent le homard dans nos eaux," *Le Courrier*, July 13, 1972. 1-2.
[38] LeBlanc, "Bateaux américains," 1-2.
[39] Cyrille LeBlanc, "Support des Pêcheurs," *Le Courrier*, October 5, 1972, 4.

Figure 4. Cartoon published in *Le Courrier* commenting on the cutting of American lobster traps by fishers in Southwest Nova Scotia. See page four of the paper's August 24, 1972, edition.

In an effort to alleviate some of these compounded issues, the federal government supplemented existing geographic closed seasons with trap limits, and altered size limits to be specific to the set fishing seasons of Atlantic Canada's nineteen inshore lobster fishing districts and sub-districts throughout the 1960s and 1970s.[40] These new regulations were accompanied by the creation of Canada's first limited entry licensing model.[41] Under the limited entry model, lobster fishing licenses could only be issued to fishers that had held them the previous year, limiting the

[40] Canada, *Lobster Fishery Task Force*, 51.
[41] Flint, "The Lobster Fishery," 136; Calhoun, *A Word to Say,* 32.

entry of newcomers and discouraging the practice of "moonlighting."[42] Additionally, inshore lobster fishers were now required to register their personal fishing boats with the state.[43] Although not drastically different from lobster fishing regulations implemented during the 1930s, the limited entry model meant that each lobster licence was directly tethered to the fisher and their vessel, as opposed to the fisher's vessel and gear being tied to the district in which they harvested.[44] In practice, however, the former half of this licencing policy thwarted the latter. Many inshore fishers or companies owned multiple vessels and began to sell them to the highest bidder, often well beyond their true value.[45] Now, any individual with access to credit or the proper buying power was able to purchase both a lobster fishing vessel and a lobster fishing licence, by proxy.[46] Although theoretically sound, the Fordist philosophy of simultaneously promoting capital expansion and industrialization while protecting the economic welfare of small-scale fishers often proved to be quite contradictory and regressive in practice.

Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Fordist model of inshore fisheries governance was phased out in Canada yet matters of access and allocation continued to be of key concern for fishers. Following the 1974 appointment of Roméo LeBlanc as Federal Minister of Fisheries, the Canadian government's approach to fisheries management was increasingly rationalized.[47] In contrast to his west-coast predecessor Jack Davis, LeBlanc was generally well-liked by inshore fishers, who identified with his working-class, Acadian, and New Brunswick roots.[48] The

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[42] Flint, "The Lobster Fishery," 136; Canada, *Lobster Fishery Task Force*, 66.
[43] Under the limited entry model, lobster fishing licences became attached to lobster fishing vessels, meaning that if a fisher sold their boat, the new owner inherited the fishing privileges associated with its licences. Flint, "The Lobster Fishery," 137-139.
[44] Flint, "The Lobster Fishery," 139.
[45] Bodiguel, "Origins of Illegal Strategies," 273.
[46] Bodiguel, "Origins of Illegal Strategies," 273.
[47] Flint, "The Lobster Fishery," 148.
[48] Calhoun, *A Word to Say,* 100; Apostle, *Challenges to Modernity*, 90.

Acadian fishers of Southwest Nova Scotia took especially kindly to LeBlanc, despite their initial skepticism towards the outsider state official.[49]

Figure 5. Roméo LeBlanc greeting several Acadian fishers in Yarmouth County. Originally captioned "Roméo LeBlanc rencontre Bernadin d'Entremont de d'Entremont Fisheries. L'on voit à droite Sylvestre Amirault, le préfet d'Argyle et Coline Campbell." See page seven of *Le Courrier*, August 7, 1975.

In August of 1975, LeBlanc toured several fishing communities in Southwest Nova Scotia, accompanied by the region's Liberal MP Coline Campbell. The excursion was heavily well-documented by *Le Courrier*, despite the paper's usual focus on ongoing and upcoming Acadian celebrations in the weeks preceding August 15th. In fact, a photo of LeBlanc with local entrepreneur Bernardin d'Entremont of West Pubnico occupied nearly half of the paper's front page for the week following the politician's visit.[50] During his time in Clare and Argyle, LeBlanc was repeatedly praised

[49] See comments in "Joe Acadien," *Le Courrier*, August 15, 1974, 16.
[50] See the front page of *Le Courrier*, August 7, 1975.

for the sincerity with which he listened to the Acadian fishers' issues, as well as how easily he communicated with them.[51] For example, one article documenting LeBlanc's 1975 visit to a school in West Pubnico described how "Le ministre fut applaudi à plusieurs reprises et il a entretenu une discussion sincère avec les pêcheurs. Il s'est montré aussi impatient que les pêcheurs en ce qui concerne la protection de la pêche."[52] Another published in the same issue of *Le Courrier* contained an even healthier dose of optimism, declaring "Depuis quelques années, le fédéral est la bête noire aux yeux des pêcheurs. Depuis l'arrivée de Roméo LeBlanc tout a changé, et avec raison."[53]

During his time in office, LeBlanc notably narrowed in on the issue of open access fisheries, arguing that previous government policies had encouraged "more and more boats to chase fewer and fewer fish, producing less and less money to divide among more and more people."[54] Specifically, LeBlanc emphasized the need for new fisheries policies designed to limit or preclude foreign access, deftly identifying the fisheries as both a vulnerable natural resource and an important source of capital.[55] Although this management philosophy may appear quite intuitive at first, LeBlanc's "social fishery" approach to alleviating the economic hardships experienced by small-scale fishers was decidedly appealing, as it acknowledged the lack of property rights assigned to individual fishers as quasi-enterprises themselves. Despite the fact that this argument had been put forth by government officials working with the economic side of the commercial fishing industry since the early 1950s, in recent years LeBlanc's legacy has become associated with the concept of a "social

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[51] In an editorial published on August 7, 1975, Cyrille LeBlanc states that he was impressed by "la sincérité et de la facilite de communication avec les pêcheurs du ministre fédéral des pêcheries, Roméo LeBlanc." See Cyrille LeBlanc, "Éditorial: Les pêcheurs et le ministre se comprennent," *Le Courrier* (West Pubnico, N.S.), August 7, 1975, 4.
[52] "Nous aurons une limite de 200 milles: Roméo Le Blanc veut la survivance des communautés de pêcheurs," *Le Courrier* (West Pubnico, N.S.), August 7, 1975, 2.
[53] Cyrille LeBlanc, "Éditorial: Les pêcheurs et le ministre se comprennent," *Le Courrier* (West Pubnico, N.S.), August 7, 1975, 4.
[54] Richard Apostle, Leonard Kasdan, and Arthur Hanson, "Political Efficacy and Political Activity among Fishermen in Southwest Nova Scotia: A Research Note," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 19, no. 1 (1984): 164, https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/article/674704/pdf.
[55] Apostle, *Challenges to Modernity*, 90.

fishery" in recent years as he operationalized several programs that explicitly engaged with the management model.[56] One of LeBlanc's most notable policy reforms was the 1977 establishment of a two-hundred-mile exclusive economic zone (EZZ) across Canadian waters. Specifically, this policy allowed for the federal government to declare jurisdiction over the country's highly profitable inshore fishing grounds, legally barring the intrusion of foreign fleets.[57] This came to great relief for the lobster fishers of Southwest Nova Scotia, who finally had the years-long "invasion" of their waters definitively addressed.

LeBlanc also addressed the issues associated with the large, unorganized, aggregation of fishers associations across the Atlantic provinces. To improve and streamline communication between fishers and government officials, LeBlanc initiated a community-based pilot program in 1976 designed to support the activities of existent and prospective fisher associations in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.[58] In support of LeBlanc's project, the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries provided a $50,000 grant to the Nova Scotia Fishermen's Association (NSFA) in 1977, hoping to facilitate its expansion.[59] However, those working on the pilot project soon realized that many of the region's individual fishers remained reluctant to join any new unions, associations, or cooperatives.[60] In response, LeBlanc established the Eastern Fishermen's Federation (EFF) in 1979. [61] This initiative grouped all of the region's individual fishers and associations under one umbrella, centralizing their lines of communication with the newly created DFO and other state officials.[62] The EFF was generally well-received by fishers from the Maritime provinces, including those from

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[56] Apostle, *Challenges to Modernity*, 89-92.
[57] Apostle, *Challenges to Modernity*, 89-92.
[58] Calhoun, *A Word to Say,* 103.
[59] Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries, *Fishermen's Collective Bargaining: Alternatives* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries, 1981), 5.
[60] Calhoun, *A Word to Say,* 104-108; Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries, *Fishermen's Collective Bargaining,* 23.
[61] Calhoun, *A Word to Say,* 104-108. Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries, *Fishermen's Collective Bargaining,* 5.
[62] Calhoun, *A Word to Say,* 104-108; Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries, *Fishermen's Collective Bargaining,* 5. The DFO was created as a distinct federal government entity in 1979.

Southwest Nova Scotia. This was primarily due to the fact that most of the region's fishers were already members of local associations as opposed to unions or cooperatives. The EFF and other programs designed to support fisher organization during the 1970s and 1980s tended to bestow generous grants and subsidies upon fisher associations, allowing for many of the Southwest region's volunteer organizers to be put on payroll.[63]

Although Southwest Nova Scotia was home to a plethora of fishers associations and cooperatives, the region was known as the heart of anti-union territory during the 1970s, by both provincial and regional fisheries organizations.[64] This is mainly due to the fact that there was not much need for fisher unionization in Clare and Argyle during the 1970s and 1980s as there were not very many large companies operating in the region.[65] Instead, the Acadian fishers often joined associations such as the Nova Scotia Fishermen's Association (NSFA), the Atlantic Fishermen's Association, the Clare Fishermen's Association, the Scotia Fundy Seiner's Association (SFSA), the Herring Gillnetters Association (representing Wedgeport), Southwest Seiners (representing the Pubnicos), and the Digby Scallop Fishermen's Association.[66]

Participating in these sorts of collective organizations was more attractive to the Acadian fishers of Clare and Argyle as it allowed them to take control of their own circumstances without threatening the livelihood of their friends, families, and neighbours, who often worked in the fish processing industry. Speaking with a journalist from *The Chronicle Herald* in 1982, the interim president of the NSFA Pat Amirault expressed how local fishers "don't want to be ripped off by the processors, but we want them to survive…If we were a union, we could be taken over."[67] A similar

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[63] Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries, *Fishermen's Collective Bargaining,* 13-23.
[64] Clement, *The Struggle to Organize,* 146.
[65] Additionally, Nova Scotian fishers were not given the right to unionize until February of 1978, following the introduction of a private member's bill by provincial NDP leader Jeremy Akerman. Calhoun, *A Word to Say,* 165.
[66] Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries, *Fishermen's Collective Bargaining,* 13-23; Clements, *The Struggle to Organize,* 133-146.
[67] Rob Gorham, "Fishers Associations Resist Unionization," *Chronicle Herald,* June 17, 1982, 25.

sentiment was put forth by the contemporary president of the SFSA, Seldon d'Entremont, who told *The Chronicle Herald*: "Nobody around here [West Pubnico] wants [unions]. We don't want them to put us ashore in a strike over prices….I've never liked….[unions] and I think there are a lot of people like me. To say unions on this side of the province is a bad word."[68]

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, representatives of the well-known United Maritime Fishermen's Union (UMFU) repeatedly failed in their attempts to penetrate the fisheries of Southwest Nova Scotia, despite the union's strong association with Acadian neo-nationalism in New Brunswick.[69] When representatives of the UMFU decided to pay Comeau Sea Foods a visit in 1972, none of the company's salaried fishers agreed to sign any of their petitions, and reportedly "ne veulent plus même être vu avec les organisateurs."[70] Even when the UMFU did eventually penetrate the Acadian fishery of Southwest Nova Scotia in March of 1983, local fishers were not interested in collective bargaining. Instead, their primary issue of concern was creating a new community-based form of governance to support the local offshore herring industry.[71]

The Acadian fishers of Southwest Nova Scotia were also keen to relate their linguistic and cultural struggles to the conditions of their work. For example, when Aurèle Comeau, president of the Scotia Fundy Seiner's Association (SFSA), was charged with obstructing the work of a fisheries officer in June of 1983, he notoriously contested the charge as a violation of his constitutional right to communicate in French. [72] According to the trial transcript published in *Le Courrier,* Comeau was arrested after refusing to let DFO officer David Bishara board his vessel during a routine vessel check.[73] After Comeau was asked to supply his boat registration and fishing licence, Comeau realized

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[68] Rob Gorham, "Fishers Associations Resist Unionization," *Chronicle Herald,* June 17, 1982, 25.
[69] Calhoun, *A Word to Say,* 148. One of the original founders of the UMFU, Gilles Theriault, was a member of the PA's leadership during the 1970s. Calhoun, *A Word to Say,* 137.
[70] Cyrille LeBlanc "Pas d'union des pêcheurs de Comeau Sea Foods," *Le Courrier*, July 13, 1972, 2.
[71] Calhoun, *A Word to Say,* 218.
[72] Yvette Valotaire and Christian Coutlee, "Parce qu'il exige du français: Pêches et Océans s'acharne sur un pêcheur de Clare," *Le Courrier*, November 16, 1983, 1-2.
[73] Valotaire and Coutlee, "Parce qu'il exige du français," 2.

he had left the latter in his truck and asked Bishara if he could go retrieve it. As Bishara did not speak French, he was unable to understand Comeau, who was equally confused by the officer's line of questioning.[74] Comeau refused to let the officer board his boat until he explained the issue to him in French, later taking off towards the wharf in Meteghan to find bilingual DFO officer Raymond Richard from Meteghan and relay the situation.[75] To the satisfaction of many, Comeau was acquitted on all charges, affirming the right of the Acadian fishers to practice their craft in French.[76]

Evidently, at a time when the goals of the FANE and other Acadian institutions in the region were increasingly difficult to obtain on a political or bureaucratic level in Nova Scotia, they sometimes proved possible within the realm of fisheries governance. Through their collective organization and self-determination, the Acadian fishers of Clare and Argyle asserted their linguistic rights, had their voices heard by politicians, and saw real results in the process. Instead of participating in unions, the Acadian fishers formed community-minded associations, demonstrating the prevalence of communitarian thought in the Acadian fishing industry, despite the Southwest region's overtly "competitive, entrepreneurial environment."[77] Despite the great deal of political support for big corporate players in the commercial fishing industry during the 1970s and 1980s, including nearby companies such as National Sea Products Ltd. based out of Lunenburg, small Acadian fishing associations and companies maintained a moderate degree of political efficacy. Evidently, the fisheries served as a communal resource for social identification and change in Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia during the neo-nationalist period, heightening the integration of the Acadian cause into political spheres. As illustrated in the subsequent two sections, the economic side of the Acadian fishing effort proved to be just as advantageous to the neo-nationalist cause.

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[74] Valotaire and Coutlee, "Parce qu'il exige du français," 2; Cyrille LeBlanc, "Aurèle J. Comeau est harcelé," *Le Courrier*, November 16, 1983, 4.
[75] Valotaire and Coutlee, "Parce qu'il exige du français," 2.
[76] LeBlanc, "Comeau est harcelé," 4.
[77] Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries, *Fishermen's Collective Bargaining,* 23.

Big Fishers in a Small Pond: Exploring the Acadian Fishing Effort

There is no nickname, colloquialism, or epithet that better illustrates the late twentieth century prosperity and acclaim of Southwest Nova Scotia's fishing effort other than "the home of the Cadillac fishermen."[78] While fishers from the eastern shores of Guysborough, Canso, and Cheticamp struggled to pull themselves above the poverty line, the fishers of Southwest Nova Scotia reported incomes and landings so abnormally high the DFO began contextualizing their statistics, lest the disparity between provincial *average* and *median* fisher income be misconstrued.[79] In fact, the annual income of Clare and Argyle's historically poor Acadian fishing communities dramatically rose above that of their anglophone neighbours during the 1980s, flipping the switch of history. Things were going so well for the Acadian fishers of West Pubnico in 1979 that even Snowball, the cat of local fisher Donald Doucette, was fed scallops for dinner every evening.[80]

Despite increased levels of state intervention, conservation management, and foreign competition during the 1970s and 1980s, the fishers of Southwest Nova Scotia still managed to fatten their wallets, all thanks to the unique ecology, topography, and economic structure of their various communities. This section looks at the economic structure of the commercial fishing industry in Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia from 1968 through to 1984, contextualizing how and why the regional fishing effort was so abnormally prosperous. In doing so, this section denotes how and why the Acadian fishing communities of Clare and Argyle managed to carve out their own place within the Southwest Shore's overall fishing effort.

To begin, it is useful to first examine how the Acadian fishing effort in Clare and Argyle compared to that of other fishing communities along the Southwest Shore. Table 3 provides an

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[78] Calhoun, *A Word to Say,* 216.
[79] Canada, Task Force on Atlantic Fisheries, *Navigating Troubled Waters*, 66.
[80] Yaffe, "Well-off Fishermen," 9.

overview of the resident fisher population, fishing fleet, landings, and landed value of Clare and Argyle's fisheries, as well as the provincial and Southwest average (i.e., Shelburne, Yarmouth, and Digby Counties).

Table 3. Overview of the Acadian Fishing Effort in Southwest Nova Scotia, 1968-1983

	Resident Fishers		Fishing Vessels		Total Landings ('000 lbs)	Total Landed Value ($,000)
	Total	Fulltime	Total	> 50 ft		
1968						
Clare	294	62	90	66	78846	2945
Argyle	740	740	847	39	103341	3812
Southwest, Avg.	507	236	348	33	55747	2640
Province, Avg.	297	88	220	14	18077	1187
1973						
Clare	199	65	123	26	37478	4056
Argyle	696	98	816	30	66977	6089
Southwest, Avg.	442	246	373	19	31268	4408
Province, Avg.	267	97	182	12	14803	1726
1983						
Clare	353	340	106	76	42979	19012
Argyle	1679	1357	454	439	83401	26213
Southwest, Avg.	192	173	75	8	12344	4550
Province, Avg.	101	41	227	5	6534	1765

Source: Canada, Statistics Canada, *Fisheries Statistics: Nova Scotia, 1968* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1970); Canada, Statistics Canada, *Fisheries Statistics: Nova Scotia, 1973* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974); Raymond, *Fishing Community Profiles,* 258-264 and 304-316.
Notes: Fulltime fishers (FT) worked more than ten months a year, part time (PT) worked between five and ten months a year, and occasional fishers worked less than five months a year. Vessels measuring less than fifty feet in length usually participated in the inshore fisheries.

As outlined above, the Acadian fishing communities of Clare and Argyle were home to a large, valuable, and primarily small boat fishery during the selected period of study. Although Clare had fewer resident fishers than Argyle or other regions of the province, larger vessels such as scallop draggers were more prevalent in the region, pulling up the district's landings and landed value. Conversely, Argyle was home to a large inshore fishing fleet and a healthy population of fulltime

fishers. This not only indicates the importance of fishing in the region, but also suggests that finding seasonal work was less of an issue for Argyle's Acadian residents. Given there were more fish producers and processors in Clare, it is likely that some fishers worked the secondary fisheries sector during fishing off seasons. The inshore or "small-boat" nature of Clare and Argyle's fishing effort is also noteworthy. During the 1970s, the inshore fisheries were often viewed quite differently by policy makers than the offshore fisheries. The policy-making rhetoric of the time tended to view the former as a "social" fishery representing relatively small capital gain, while the latter was perceived as a more "economic' and "corporate" endeavour.[81] In other words, the prosperity of the Acadian small-boat fishery in Southwest Nova Scotia's was a decisive hallmark of the region's specificity. Despite the fact that the Acadian fishers from Argyle (Fisheries Statistical District (FSD) thirty-three) had 36% fewer offshore vessels than nearby FSD thirty-two (Shelburne County), the two regions recorded near identical total landed values in 1969.[82] Notably, the two regions harvested similar species during the period of study.

As outlined in table 3, Clare and Argyle recorded some of the greatest landings and landed values in Southwest Nova Scotia, as well as housed a large number of resident fishers and a highly modernized fleet. Although the nearby counties of Shelburne, Barrington, Yarmouth, and Digby all had larger populations than Clare and Argyle, the Acadian fishers still managed to dominate the local industry.[83] In light of these historical circumstances, what exactly made the Acadian fishing effort in Clare and Argyle so uniquely prosperous?

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[81] Gene Barrett, "The State and Capital in the Fishing Industry: The Case of Nova Scotia," (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Halifax, N.S., May 27, 1981), 1. Although the offshore sector tends to only include vessels over one hundred feet, the large vessels of FSD 33 and FSD 32 were both operating on a year-round basis, a hallmark of the offshore industry. See Davis and Kasdan, "Bankrupt Gov Policies," 111.
[82] FSD 33 recorded a total landed value of $4,796,000 in 1969, while FSD 34 recorded a total landed value of $4,700,037. See Table 8. Classification of Fishing Craft Over 10 Tons by Overall Length and Fisheries District, Nova Scotia, 1969 and 1970, in Canada, Statistics Canada, *Fisheries Statistics: Nova Scotia, 1970* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1972), 24-25.
[83] In 1983, Clare had a total population of 5,739, while Argyle had a total population of 7,548. Comparatively, Yarmouth had a total population of 12,040, while Digby had a total population of 6,319. Raymond, *Fishing Community Profiles,* 258-264 and 304-316.

To further parse out the answer to this question, it is useful to summarize the ways in which the geographical and topographical features of Clare and Argyle's Acadian fishing communities influenced the prosperity and competitiveness of their localized fishing efforts.

The first factor to consider here is coastline orientation, as the direction in which fishing vessels leaving Southwest Nova Scotia travelled evidently determined which fishing grounds, marine ecosystems, and species a fisher was able to access from their home port. During the late twentieth century, inshore fishing vessels departing from Meteghan, Church Point, and Saulnierville usually followed a southwestward trajectory into the depths of the Baie Sainte-Marie.[84] These fishers often harvested high-quality lobster, herring, scallops, and clams, as well as various types of groundfish within the confines of the Baie.[85] Larger fishing boats from the region tended to travel further south towards Argyle, where lay a series of rich and vast fishing grounds or banks. Diverse marine ecosystems such as the Scotian Shelf, Brown's Bank and Browns Shoal were reasonably close to Clare and contained similar species to those of the Baie Sainte-Marie, allowing for an expansion and intensification of the localized fishing effort.[86] It is also important to note that the Baie Sainte-Marie was often subject to extreme tides and unique weather patterns, primarily due to its proximity to the Bay of Fundy.[87] For ten out of twelve months, fishers from the Baie Sainte-Marie were likely to encounter cool, damp, and foggy conditions during their harvest. The proximity of alternative fishing banks to the south of Clare allowed fishers to adjust their vessel trajectory based on weather conditions while still being able to access the same high-quality species found closer to home.

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[84] Deveau, *La Ville Française,* 102-103.
[85] Raymond, *Scotia-Fundy Profiles,* 304-316. Most popular were cod, pollock, and haddock.
[86] Deveau, *La Ville Française,* 102-103.
[87] The tidal dynamics of the Bay created localized weather effects such as fog and mist due to the interaction between warmer ocean waters and cooler air temperatures. Deveau, *La Ville Française,* 102-103; Raymond, *Scotia-Fundy Profiles,* 304-316.

While the coastline orientation of Argyle's Acadian fishing communities also facilitated access to the Scotian Shelf, Brown's Bank, and Browns Shoal, many of the region's fishers often traveled further southwest into the depths of the Atlantic to secure their harvest. Vessels departing from West Pubnico, SAR, and Wedgeport often regularly fished in areas such as Baccaro Bank and Georges Bank, located quite far off the province's southern coast. Both of these areas were known as large, productive fishing grounds for species such as cod, haddock, lobster, scallops, and groundfish, diversifying the local fishing effort.[88] German Bank, situated to the southwest of Argyle in the Gulf of Maine was also a key fishing ground, offering species such as haddock, cod, and various types of flatfish.[89] Occasionally, fishers from Argyle also traveled to the nearby La Have Bank, where they harvested similar species.[90] Even more so than in Clare, fishing vessels departing from Argyle were able to adjust their trajectory to accommodate seasonal rotations, weather patterns, target species, and fishing grounds. Additionally, the Atlantic Ocean often experienced warmer surface water temperatures than the Bay of Fundy, producing different marine ecosystem and species dynamics. However, the proximity of Argyle's fishing communities to the Atlantic Ocean did not necessarily make the localized fishing effort any less challenging or predictable than that of Clare. Notably, the coastal weather patterns in Argyle were influenced by the temperature, currents, and weather systems of the Atlantic Ocean as opposed to the Bay of Fundy. As a result, fishers and vessels were more exposed to coastal storms originating over deep water, including hurricanes and nor'easters.[91] The fishers of Argyle regularly experienced more intense weather events during storm seasons than those felt in Clare, including strong winds, heavy rain, and widespread coastal erosion. This led some fishers to occasionally travel towards Clare into the Bay of

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[88] Canada, Statistics Canada, *Fisheries Statistics: Nova Scotia, 1976* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1977), 4.
[89] Canada, Statistics Canada, *Fisheries Statistics: Nova Scotia, 1976* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1977), 4; Raymond, *Scotia-Fundy Profiles,* 258-264.
[90] Raymond, *Scotia-Fundy Profiles,* 258-264. Mainly lobster and groundfish.
[91] Raymond, *Scotia-Fundy Profiles,* 258-264.

Fundy or the Minas Basin to avoid damage to their vessels or gear in periods of especially inclement weather.[92] Collectively, the coastline orientation and geography of Clare and Argyle's foremost Acadian fishing communities supported a diversified and competitive fishing effort. The ability of fishers to change location based on target species, weather patterns, vessel size, and seasonal availability was essential to their localized economic prosperity.

The success of the Acadian fishing effort in Clare and Argyle was further bolstered by the advantageous topographical features of their ports. Specifically, the two regions were home to a variety of exceptionally well-sheltered, modernized, and accessible small craft harbours. Drawing upon the DFO's 1982 *Guide the Small Craft Harbours,* it is also useful to explore the specifications and services offered by each of Clare and Argyle's contemporary fishing ports. Contextualizing this technical information provides further insight into the specificity and sophistication of the contemporary Acadian fishing effort. For one, the 1982 *Guide to Small Craft Harbours* indicates that the ports and harbours of Clare's Acadian three fishing communities had the greatest wharf lengths, berthages, breakwaters, and low tide depths found along the Baie Sainte Marie.[93] These infrastructural elements are important to mention, as they all play a determining role in the success and competitiveness of a fishers home port, as the overall length of a wharf or berth determines the number and diversity of vessels a port can accommodate. Every single one of Clare's six Acadian fishing ports was home to a wharf longer than 152 metres by 1982, as well as a berthage of more than 114 metres.[94] This indicates that the Acadian fishing ports of Clare were able to accommodate large offshore fishing vessels such as trawlers, draggers, gillnetters, and purse seines during the late twentieth century, all of which tended to measure between ten and thirty metres in length.[95] As the

[92] Deveau, *La Ville Française,* 102-103.
[93] Canada, *Guide to Small Craft Harbours, Nova Scotia*, 1.
[94] Canada, *Guide to Small Craft Harbours, Nova Scotia*, 1.
[95] Canada, *Guide to Small Craft Harbours, Nova Scotia*, 2.

offshore fishing effort in Southwest Nova Scotia expanded throughout the 1970s, the Acadian fishing communities of Clare stood alone as six of the eight ports along the Baie Sainte-Marie able to accommodate such vessels.

Additionally, each of Clare's Acadian fishing ports except the Cape St. Mary were home to an impressive breakwater during the selected period of study. Breakwaters are a common type of publicly accessible marine infrastructure designed to protect ports and harbours from dangerous winds, waves, and currents.[96] Driving through populated areas of Nova Scotia, it is common to encounter large mounds of rubble, stacks of concrete blocks, or vertical walls installed along the water's edge or slightly offshore, all of which serve as breakwaters. Within the context of the commercial fishing industry — as well as the often-volatile weather patterns experienced on the Southwest Shore — having a large port or harbour breakwater is incredibly advantageous. Apart from improving the safety and navigability of a port, breakwaters also contribute to the overall resilience and efficiency of the localized fishing effort. By mitigating the impacts of wave-driven currents, high winds, and erosive tidal action, breakwaters help protect valuable marine assets such as wharves, winches, lighthouses, and fishing fleets from incurring any environmental damage, as well as reduce the amount of time and energy fishers must dedicated to vessel repair and berthing. The competitiveness and safety of Clare's Acadian fishing ports was further supported by the range of marine services they offered. Across all six ports, vessel navigation was facilitated by the presence of flood lights and navigation beacons, as was boat launching and anchorage thanks to the variety of available winches and skidways.[97] The region's largest port of Meteghan even provided fishers access to gasoline and diesel fuel, a 220-volt power hookup, and a fully electric haul-out engine to facilitate on-site vessel repair and inspection.[98]

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[96] Apostle, "Political Efficacy," 162.
[97] Canada, *Guide to Small Craft Harbours, Nova Scotia*, 1.
[98] Canada, *Guide to Small Craft Harbours, Nova Scotia*, 2.

Although Argyle was home to twice as many Acadian fishing ports as Clare in 1982, the region's marine infrastructure was, on average, smaller and less modernized. Over half of Argyle's twelve Acadian fishing ports had an overall wharf length of less than one hundred metres, and eight were without a breakwater.[99] This is not to say, however, that Argyle's ports were less productive or sophisticated than those found in Clare, but rather to highlight the greater disparity between the specification and services of each port in the region. For example, SAR's largest port at Sluice Point had a wharf length of only sixty-eight metres and a maximum berthage of less than 110 metres.[100] Comparatively, Abbot's Harbour in West Pubnico and Wedgepoint in Wedgeport could support the berthage of several large offshore vessels at once and offered a plethora of marine services.[101]

Collectively, the geography, ecology, and topography of Clare and Argyle's Acadian fishing communities was decidedly unique within the broader context of the Southwest Shore's commercial fishing industry. These imbricated factors abetted the Acadian fishers ability to diversify, modernize, and expand their fishing effort throughout the 1970s and 1980s. However, these factors alone cannot fully explain nor capture the regional specificity of the Acadian fishing effort. To further parse out how and why the Acadian fishers were so prosperous, it is necessary to survey the economic structures of Clare and Argyle's foremost Acadian fishing communities. During the mid-to-late twentieth century, there were a plethora of local fish producers, fish processing plants, gear and supply stores, marine services (i.e., boat building or boat repair), fish markets, and infrastructure operating across the Acadian fishing communities of Clare and Argyle. By exploring how these essential economic structures influenced popular modes of production and the nature of capital accumulation across the two regions, the embeddedness of the fishing industry — as well as the regional specificity of the Acadian fishing effort — can be more clearly delineated.

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[99] Canada, *Guide to Small Craft Harbours, Nova Scotia*, 2.
[100] Canada, *Guide to Small Craft Harbours, Nova Scotia*, 2.
[101] Canada, *Guide to Small Craft Harbours, Nova Scotia*, 2.

During the late twentieth century, the fishing industry was deeply embedded in the economic structure of Clare and Argyle and was largely driven by an Acadian labour force. Although Church Point, Meteghan, and Saulnierville did not benefit from the same proximity to deep-sea fishing banks as West Pubnico, SAR, and Wedgeport, these three communities still managed to make an impressive name for themselves by fishing various types of inshore shellfish. Across Southwest Nova Scotia, the Acadian fishing communities of Clare were known for their large fish processing operations. Notably, the region's fish plants had a more diversified output of secondary fish products than those found in Argyle. From the late 1960s through to the mid 1980s, there were a collective total of twenty-four producers and processors operating across the Acadian fishing communities of Clare and Argyle. These companies are listed alongside their average employment by sex, working language, and family ownership in table 4.

Table 4. Fish Producers and Processors in Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia, 1968-1984

	Employment			**Working Language**	**Family Ownership**
	M	**F**	**T**		
Church Point					
A.W.H. Enterprises Ltd.+	-	-	15	Bilingual	Comeau
Belliveau Fisheries Ltd. + •	-	-	25	French	Belliveau
Frankland Canning Co. Ltd.	30	25	55	Bilingual	Comeau
Summer Fisheries Ltd. +	-	-	6	Bilingual	Comeau
Meteghan					
Charles L. Deveau & Sons	17	3	20	French	Deveau
St. Mary's Bay Fisheries Ltd. +	40	40	80	Bilingual	D'Entremont, Comeau
US-FOUR Fisheries Ltd. +	28	12	40	French	Bourque, Thimot
Saulnierville					
Clare Fisheries Ltd.	18	22	40	French	Comeau
Comeau & Saulnier Ltd.	60	55	115	French	Comeau
Comeau's Sea Foods Ltd.	80	200	280	French	Comeau
West Pubnico					
Acadian Fish Processors +	-	-	20	Bilingual	Surette
Dennis Point Fisheries Ltd. +	15	10	25	French	D'Entremont
D'Entremont Fisheries Ltd. •	-	-	28	French	D'Entremont
D'Entremont, Joseph •	-	-	5	French	D'Entremont

D'Éon, S.F. Seafoods Ltd. +	45	55	100	French	D'Éon
Inshore Fisheries Ltd.	-	40	40	Bilingual	D'Entremont
Little Island Fisheries Ltd. +	7	-	7	French	D'Entremont
Surrette, Walter Fisheries Ltd.	-	-	35	French	Surrette
SAR					
Sans Souci Seafoods Ltd. +	6	4	10	English	Smith
Wedgeport					
Ellenwood Island Fisheries	-	-	4	Bilingual	LeBlanc
LeBlanc, A.L. Ltd.	-	-	45	French	LeBlanc
Murphy, William Fisheries +	-	-	50	English	Murphy
Turpentine Seiners Ltd.	-	-	6	Bilingual	LeBlanc
Wedgeport Marine Products +	-	-	20	English	Nickerson

Source: Data from Statistics Canada, *Fish Products Industry Annual Census of Manufacturers* published between 1973-1984 (Ottawa: Information Canada); Nova Scotia Department of Development, *Nova Scotia Directory of Manufacturers* published between 1972-1977 (Halifax: Department of Development); and Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries, *Nova Scotia Directory of Fish Products* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries, 1984). Working language and gender statistics from Simon Larade, *Aperçu des éléments économiques des régions acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse* (Halifax: Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, 1983), 98-115, 132-173.
Note: Enterprises with a (+) opened during the period of study and enterprises with a (•) closed during the period of study.

Exploring this data provides further insight into the economic embeddedness of the fishing industry in late twentieth century Clare and Argyle. For one, all but two of the region's twenty-four fish producing enterprises were owned by local Acadian families, and thirteen conducted their business uniquely in French. This suggests that the ability of the Acadians to speak their native language at work was well supported by the fish processing industry, as well as demonstrates the localized ownership of the Acadian fishing effort. Additionally, many companies had a large female workforce. During the late twentieth century, women played an important and often overlooked role in the Acadian fishing effort of Clare and Argyle. There existed a strict sexual division of labour between the two sides of the commercial fishing effort in the region— i.e., the fishing and the fish processing — as reflected in table 4. Tasks such as fish packing, sanitation, quality control, and bookkeeping were often delegated to the women of the community as a form of "female work,"

widely accepted to be "low-paid, unskilled, or semi-skilled."[102] Although essential to the overall fishing effort, working in the processing side of the fishery left many of the region's women with seasonal work that rarely provided maternity leave or qualified for unemployment insurance benefits.[103] Nevertheless, work opportunities were limited in Clare and Argyle, and the prevalence of fish processors in the region provided a large number of local women with the ability to procure their own source of livelihood. It also allowed for local fishers and independent commodity producers to have their essential onshore labour met, including important task such as bookkeeping.

The Acadian fishing communities of Clare and Argyle were home to a combined total of fourteen producers and processors in 1969, but that number grew to twenty-one by 1982. Although some of these businesses were opened by local fisher-entrepreneurs, many were owned by the well-known Acadian fish producer from Clare Comeau Sea Foods Ltd. Founded by two lobster fishing brothers from Saulnierville in 1946, Bernadin and Clarence Comeau transformed Comeau Sea Foods from a small-scale local smokehouse into one of the first fish producing companies from Clare to penetrate the international market.[104] In its early days, Comeau Sea Foods focused on the salting and smoking of herring, as both products sold well on international markets, had a long shelf life, and low transportation costs.[105] Having established a loyal clientele, the business expanded their offerings during the 1960s to include fresh fish, lobster, and scallops. By the 1970s, Comeau Sea Foods had built their own fish meal factory in Comeauville, putting additional resources back into the localized fishing effort.

Importantly, the diversification of the company's value-added fish products not only bolstered the Comeau brother's economic success, but also created a number of job opportunities

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[102] Suzan Ilcan, "The Position of Women in the Secondary Fishing Industry: A Community Based Study" (Gorsebrook Research Institute, Saint Mary's University, Working paper no. 8, 1985), 1.
[103] Ilcan, "The Position of Women," 18.
[104] Rob Gorham, "Clare's largest employer," *The Chronicle Herald*, April 12, 1986.
[105] Rob Gorham, "Clare's largest employer," *The Chronicle Herald*, April 12, 1986.

for the residents of Saulnierville and adjacent communities. In fact, Comeau Sea Foods processing plant employed an average of 280 people during the 1970s and 1980s, the vast majority of which were women. By 1982, Comeau Sea Foods' had opened or acquired several other local businesses such as Dennis Point Fisheries Ltd. in Lower West Pubnico (1978), Clare Fisheries Ltd in Comeauville (1979), and Comeau and Saulnier Ltd. in Comeauville (1981), producing an additional 180 jobs.[106] Furthermore, *Le Courrier* reported in 1982 that the fishing fleet of Comeau Sea Food's employed over 225 fulltime fishers.[107] Importantly, of these over seven hundred employees on Bernadin and Clarence's payroll, more than 40% were women, and all of them had the opportunity to speak French at work. Bernadin and Clarence famously took pride in their Acadian heritage, and often used it to leverage business connections and give back to the local community. For example, advertisements for Comeau Sea Foods often emphasized the number of local jobs the "Acadian Brand" had created, as well as celebrated the fact that the enterprise remained "entre les mains d'Acadiens de la Baie Ste-Marie" (figure 6).

[106] "Comeau's Sea Foods Ltée," *Le Courrier*, March 31, 1982, 9.
[107] "Comeau's Sea Foods Ltée," *Le Courrier*, March 31, 1982, 9.

Figure 6. Advertisement for Comeau Seafoods within the Special Industry of *Le Courrier* on the Kirby Report. March 31, 1982, 9.

During the late twentieth century, the Acadian fishing communities of Clare and Argyle were also home to several fish gear, supply, and marine services companies. The presence of these sorts of industries played a determining role in the overall competitiveness and efficiency of the local fishing effort, allowing residents to access vessels, technology, and supplies at ease. These companies are listed alongside their average employment by sex, working language, and family ownership in table 5.

Table 5. Fishing Gear, Supply, and Marine Services Companies in Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia, 1968-1984

	Employment			**Working Language**	**Family Ownership**
Church Point	**M**	**F**	**T**		
Saulnier-Thibault Poisson Grossistes +	2	-	2	French	Thibault
Theriault, Fred J. (Lobster Boats)	2	-	2	French	Theriault
Meteghan					
Boudreau, Alfred J. (Boatbuilding) + •	-	-	2	French	Boudreau
Clare Machine Works Ltd. (Equipment)	5	-	5	French	Stuart
Comeau, E.M. & Sons Ltd. (Crates)	-	-	62	French	Comeau
Comeau Lobster Crates +	-	-	3	Bilingual	Comeau
Deveau, John (Boatbuilding)	4	-	4	French	Deveau
Deveau, Joseph (Boatbuilding)	4	-	4	French	Deveau
Doucette, H.A. Boatbuilders Co. Ltd.	3	-	3	French	Doucette
Doucette, Roy M. Boatbuilders Ltd.	3	-	3	French	Doucette
Hamilton & Porter Ltd. (Boatbuilding)	-	-	7	Bilingual	Pottier
Meteghan Woodworkers Ltd. (Crates) •	10	-	10	Bilingual	Comeau
Pothier, Elie (Boatbuilding) +	2	-	2	French	Pothier
St. Mary's Bay Industries Ltd. (Repair) + •	-	-	30	Bilingual	Boudreau
Theriault, A.F. & Sons Ltd. (Boatbuilding)	58	2	60	French	Theriault
Saulnierville					
Atlantic Netting, Rope & Twine +	-	-	3	Bilingual	Doucette
Clare Construction & Repair Ltd. +	5	-	5	Bilingual	LeBlanc/Muise
LeBlanc, Philip Diesel Repairs + •	-	-	4	Bilingual	LeBlanc
Orion Electronics Ltd. (Radios, Sonar) +	-	-	14	French	Comeau
Thibault, Robert (Lobster Cages)	-	-	1	French	Thibault

Thibodeau, Benjamin (Lobster Cages)	1	-	1	French	Thibodeau
West Pubnico					
D'Entremont, Delisle (Boatbuilding) + •	-	-	1	French	D'Entremont
D'Entremont, Harold (Boatbuilding) + •	-	-	3	French	D'Entremont
D'Entremont, James (Boatbuilding) +	3	-	3	French	D'Entremont
D'Entremont, Lucien N. (Boatbuilding)	1	-	1	French	D'Entremont
D'Entremont Fabrication (Equipment) +	4	-	4	French	D'Entremont
D'Éon Body Builders	5	-	5	Bilingual	D'Éon
D'Éon, Camille (Boatbuilding)	5	-	5	French	D'Éon
D'Éon's Fish Market +	2	-	2	French	D'Éon
D'Éon, Vernon Lobster Plugs +	4	-	4	French	D'Éon
Paul's Water Service (Repairs) +	1	-	1	French	D'Entremont
SAR					
Franklyn's Metal Fabrication (Anchors) +	1	-	1	Bilingual	Moulaison
Morris Island Boatshop Ltd. +	5	-	5	English	Rosbe
Wedgeport					
Boudreau, George E. (Boatbuilding) + •	-	-	5	French	Boudreau
Cottreau's Boat Shop +	16	-	16	French	Cottreau
Fundy Twine Ltd. (Nets) +	3	-	3	Bilingual	Amirault
LeBlanc, A.L. Ltd. (Boatbuilding, gear)	-	-	45	Bilingual	LeBlanc
LeBlanc Brothers Construction (Boats) +	5	-	5	French	LeBlanc
LeBlanc, Cecil Machine Shop (Repair)	1	-	1	French	LeBlanc
Murphy's Boat Shop + •	-	-	15	English	Murphy
Tri-County Fiberglass (Boatbuilding) +	-	-	7	English	Fitzgerald

Source: Average employment data from Statistics Canada, *Fish Products Industry Annual Census of Manufacturers* published between 1973-1984 (Ottawa: Information Canada); Nova Scotia Department of Development, *Nova Scotia Directory of Manufacturers* published between 1972-1977 (Halifax: Department of Development); and Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries, *Nova Scotia Directory of Fish Products* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries, 1984). Working language and gender statistics from Simon Larade, *Aperçu des éléments économiques des régions acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse* (Halifax: Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, 1983), 98-115, 132-173.
Note: Enterprises with a (+) opened during the period of study and enterprises with a (•) closed during the period of study.

As was the case in the fish producing and processing industry, Clare and Argyle's marine service enterprises often offered local Acadian residents the opportunity to work in French. In fact, only three enterprises across the two regions were owned by non-Acadian families. Besides offering local fishers easy access to gear, vessels, and supplies, the marine service industry in Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia also strengthened the region's plight for cultural and linguistic preservation. Similar to Comeau Sea Foods, many of these local enterprises took pride in the Acadian character of their daily

operations, often publishing French ads in *Le Courrier* and submitting floats the annual parade of the Festival Acadien de Clare.[108] This demonstrates how even on the smallest of levels, Acadian cultural preservation and the fisheries were intertwined in Clare and Argyle during the Acadian neo-nationalist period.

Additionally, there were very few businesses in Clare and Argyle not tied to the fisheries sector during the 1970s and 1980s. For example, there were only six businesses operating in Argyle not listed in tables 4 or 5, including bakeries, jewelry stores, and truck body manufacturers. These enterprises employed a collective total of only twenty-seven individuals, as compared to the 132 that worked in the marine service industry.[109] Of the same token, only three of Clare's local enterprises were not directly tied to the fishing industry, all of which were furniture repair shops.[110] Collectively, at a time when Acadian society was being reimagined by the neo-nationalist movement and economic liberalism rose to the forefront, the commercial fisheries were one element of daily Acadian life that represented both continuity and change in the Southwest region. Although the Acadians were not able to obtain the same political gains as their New Brunswick neighbours, they still managed to assert their economic and linguistic specificity. At its core, this chapter demonstrates how all the economic activities related to the fisheries in Clare and Argyle's Acadian fishing communities were intricately tied to the region's social and cultural fabric.

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[108] For a few examples, see "Le Festival Acadien 1968," *Le Courrier*, August 22, 1968, 2; "Le Festival Acadien," *Le Courrier*, July 9, 1970. 4; "Le comité des fêtes de 1984 lance l'invitation..." *Le Courrier*, November 2, 1983, 3.
[109] See Nova Scotia Department of Development, *Nova Scotia Directory of Manufacturers* published between 1972-1977 (Halifax: Department of Development); Larade, *Aperçu des éléments économiques,* 98-115, 132-173.
[110] See Larade, *Aperçu des éléments économiques,* 98-115,

Chapter 3

Social and Societal Structuration: "Un genre de vie qui leur est propre"[1]

> Si nous voulons, voir même si nous désirons, un revirement de ces statistiques [d'assimilation linguistique], il va falloir que les Acadiens commencent à penser au secteur économie… Il faut des gens qui luttent pour nos droits linguistiques. Mais il faut surtout des gens qui vont bâtir des industries et créer des emplois. Tel est le nouveau défi des Acadiens.[2]

Taken from an August 1972 article published in *Le Courrier*, the above quote exemplifies the idea that the economic circumstances of Nova Scotia's Acadian population were inherently tied to their social and cultural aspirations during the height of the neo-nationalist movement. As an ethno-linguistic minority, the Acadians of Nova Scotia had been continuously relegated to lower societal stratums throughout the province's three-hundred-year history. In light of this difficult past, the argument that any successful revival of Acadian culture, language, and heritage in Nova Scotia was contingent upon the collective's economic success is both justified and understandable. Throughout the economically prosperous and densely populated Acadian fishing communities of Clare and Argyle, this theory indeed proved to be correct.

This final chapter adds to the running list of reasons why the Acadian fishing effort in Southwest Nova Scotia was so singular, prosperous, and historically significant during the late twentieth century. To do so, it moves away from posing the economic or ecological structure of Clare and Argyle's Acadian fishing communities as an analytical point of departure, and instead focuses on how certain social and cultural structures, as foundational to daily life in the region, were impacted by the economic embeddedness of the fishing industry. The first section explores the ways in which this dynamic was realized on an institutional level, delineating how the economic

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[1] Dupont, "L'Influence de la mer," 32.
[2] Claude Bourque, "La Francophonie: est-elle en perte de vitesse?" *Le Courrier*, August 17, 1972, 7.

embeddedness of the fisheries influenced the activities of the FANE, *Le Courrier*, and the Université Sainte-Anne. Here, a great deal of emphasis is placed on the value of social capital, sense of place, and community resilience in sustaining both the economic livelihood and cultural security of rural, francophone fishing communities. The second section moves further into the realm of meaning, discussing how popular forms of social regulation, traditional pillars of community life, and socio-cultural identifiers unique to the Acadian fishing communities of Clare and Argyle evolved during the late twentieth century. Specifically, this section looks at the interplay between socio-economic structures tied to the Acadian fishing effort in Southwest Nova Scotia and the localized importance of religion, storytelling, and cultural celebrations in defining the parameters of regional Acadianité and community cohesiveness — all of which were especially important during the height of the neo-nationalist movement. As a whole, this chapter expands upon the idea that economic relationships and behaviours are not isolated or purely market-driven but are also influenced by and intertwined with various social or cultural factors. In doing so, it serves to compliment the previous chapter by demonstrating how the region's unique economic and ecological structures modified, impinged upon, or established new social structures during the period of study.

Fishing for Change: Local Acadian Institutions and the Fisheries

On the eve of the first annual congress of the Parti Acadien in 1973, Rosie d'Entremont of West Pubnico submitted an influential opinion piece to *Le Courrier* titled "L'Acadie du 20e siècle."[3] From the article's outset, d'Entremont applauds *Le Courrier* for having closely documented the activities of local Acadian businessmen, politicians, and community leaders associated with the

[3] Michael Poplyansky, "L'Acadie aux Acadiens! : Le nationalisme du Parti acadien, 1977-1982," *Acadiensis* 42, no. 2 (2013): 79, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24329553.

FANE, declaring that the newspaper has contributed so greatly to "le développement des Acadiens" that "bientôt [*Le Courrier*] ne portera plus le titre 'Petit' mais le 'Gros' Courrier."[4] She goes on to assert that more outsiders ought to acknowledge the progressiveness of Southwest Nova Scotia's Acadian population, condemning the proclivity of anglophone newspapers and the provincial government to paint the region in an unfavourable light, particularly within tourism literature. According to d'Entremont, "Nous, les Acadiens du Sud-Ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse, nous vivons l'Acadie du 20e siècle. Dans notre région, les moins étudies, mais des gens qui sont bien éduqués et réveilles font les plus gros salaires et vivent bien à l'aise. Ils ne sont pas des lâches et des paresseux."[5]

The tone and perspective put forth by d'Entremont is not singular nor unduly personal. In fact, her diction perfectly aligns with that of countless other Acadian individuals and institutions. This section is dedicated to exploring how the Acadian fishing effort shaped the imagination, pursuit, and implementation of certain social, cultural, and economic initiatives spearheaded by Acadian institutions in Southwest Nova Scotia. Maritime anthropologists have long documented how community embeddedness of the fishing industry produces a dynamic of "institutional interconnectivity," wherein the realms of "economic, cultural, and social life impinge on and shape each Other." In the case of the Acadians of Clare and Argyle, who held strong ethno-cultural social identities alongside their occupational identities as fishers, this imbrication was all the more present. By looking at how "institutional interconnectivity" presented itself in the region, this section narrows in on the connection between the economic structure of the fisheries and the social structure of Clare and Argyle's Acadian fishing communities.

To begin, it is useful to first discuss the ways in which authors writing for *Le Courrier* discursively classified, evaluated, and leveraged the interface of Acadianité and the fisheries in

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[4] Rosie d'Entremont, "Opinion du lecteur: L'Acadie du 20e siècle," *Le Courrier*, April 5, 1973, 4.
[5] d'Entremont, "L'Acadie du 20e siècle," 6.

Southwest Nova Scotia. Although briefly noted in the introduction, the fact that *Le Courrier* was one of the most —if not *the* most — effective and influential institutions serving the Acadians of Nova Scotia during the late twentieth century is worth repeating. The role of *Le Courrier* in Acadian daily life was amplified by the public's fluctuating (yet overtly negative) perception of municipal, provincial and federal governments, the FANE, and Nova Scotia's anglophone press. The latter is particularly important to touch upon, as several contributors to *Le Courrier* expressed their latent dissent towards Nova Scotia's largest anglophone newspaper *The Chronicle Herald* throughout the 1970s.[6] Within *Le Courrier*, several articles refer to *The Chronicle Herald* as a viciously "anti-acadien" journal and run by an elitist group of "bigots anti-français." In a 1972 editorial, Cyrille LeBlanc even asked his paper's readers:

> Où est le Chronicle Herald lorsque les Acadiens de la N.-E. ont besoin de support? Pourquoi donne-t-il seulement le point de vue qui nous tient en bas de l'échelle économique, éducationnelle et politique? Très peu d'Acadiens sont employés du gouvernement provincial. Si le Chronicle Herald est intéressé à la justice, pourquoi ne nous aide-t-il pas? Une telle attitude de la part d'un journal qui a beaucoup d'influence, le Chronicle Herald, ne peut faire autre que détruire notre pays.[7]

On all accounts, the nationalistic tone, strong Acadian emphasis, and institutional authority of *Le Courrier* during the 1970s and 1980s was coevally perceptible and is historically verifiable. Bearing this in mind, the fact that *Le Courrier* featured an unusually large number of articles on the fisheries between 1968 and 1984 is a novel observation that bears historical significance.

In preparation of this thesis, a comprehensive analysis of every article published in *Le Courrier* between 1968 and 1984 was effectuated, and an informal index of each article pertaining to the fisheries was assembled. Through this process, certain journalistic trends were identified, and the

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[6] For a few particularly fiery examples, see Cyrille LeBlanc, "Éditorial: Nous lutterons contre l'hypocrisie du Chronicle-Herald," *Le Courrier*, May 30, 1974; "Joe Acadien," *Le Courrier*, September 4, 1975; Cyrille LeBlanc, "Why don't they all go back to their lily pads," *Le Courrier*, June 8, 1972, 4.
[7] LeBlanc, "Why don't they all go back to their lily pads," 4.

perceived relevance of the fisheries to the Acadians of Southwest Nova Scotia — as delineated by individuals and institutions associated with *Le Courrier* — was feasibly discerned by way of qualitatively analyzing and quantitatively summarizing each article in the newspaper's vast archive. Between 1968 and 1984, *Le Courrier* published an average of 110 articles per year pertaining to the fisheries. Of these articles, approximately 8% were editorials, and 25% appeared on the paper's front page. Additionally, *Le Courrier* often printed supplemental material on the Acadian fishing effort in Southwest Nova Scotia, as well as other documents pertaining to the Atlantic fisheries. For example, the paper included over twenty-five extra pages of content in March of 1982, summarizing and celebrating the findings of the Task Force on Atlantic Fisheries. Articles such as "La pêche c'est notre industrie," praised the specificity of the Acadian fishing effort in Southwest Nova Scotia, while others listed the number of local jobs tied to the fishing industry.[8] In May of 1976, *Le Courrier* even attached the federal government's 110 page long *Policy for Canada's Commercial Fisheries* to every single issue, encouraging readers to "étudier le document et faire connaitre leurs opinions et au public et au gouvernement."[9] Throughout 1978 and 1979, copies of the New Brunswick based Acadian fishing magazine *Au Quai – Le Magazine des gens de mer* were also stapled to late December issues of *Le Courrier.*[10]

These observations are noteworthy for several reasons. For one, the Acadian fishers of Southwest Nova Scotia had access to their own fisheries specific newspaper — *The Sou'Wester* — which was published in Yarmouth and edited by Acadian resident Allen Muise of Wedgeport.[11] Additionally, the mandate of *Le Courrier* after 1972 was to document Acadian issues at a provincial

[8] Réjean Aucoin, "La pêche c'est notre industrie," *Le Courrier*, March 31, 1982, 4.
[9] Cyrille LeBlanc, "Editorial: Une politique sur la pêche," *Le Courrier*, May 20, 1976, 4.
[10] For example, see the issue of *Le Courrier* published on December 26, 1979. A 1980 copy of *Au Quai* is also attached to the July 23, 1980, issue of *Le Courrier.*
[11] MacInnes, *Clare, Digby County,* 23. The circulation of *Le Courrier* and the *Sou'Wester* both peaked in 1981, when the two papers had a weekly distribution of 4,450; and 12,500 respectively.

level, primarily due to its ownership by the FANE.[12] Outside of Southwest Nova Scotia, the province's largest Acadian population lived in urban areas of Halifax, and were evidently less impacted by the evolution of the commercial fishing industry. The overwhelming focus on the commercial fisheries of Southwest Nova Scotia within *Le Courrier,* a critical method of communication for Nova Scotia's Acadian population, ultimately demonstrates the social and cultural embeddedness of the industry. The fact that *Le Courrier* printed so many articles and supplementary material about the commercial fisheries during the neo-nationalist period further exemplifies the idea that the industry was more than just economically relevant for the Acadians, but also politically, culturally, and socially important.

Apart from the institution's role in assembling and printing *Le Courrier*, the FANE also expressed a great deal of interest in the commercial fishing industry during the neo-nationalist period. For example, when representatives of the federal government's MacDonald Commission visited Halifax in October of 1983 to discuss local economic and constitutional issues with residents, they were surprised by the province's lack of fisher representation.[13] The head of the Commission, Donald MacDonald, remarked that no individuals or associations representing "la plus traditionnelle industrie de la province" had attempted to meet with him, nor participated in local town halls.[14] However, on the Commission's third day in Halifax, a discussion on the fisheries was finally raised, and it was raised by the FANE. Before representatives of the Commission, as well as MacDonald himself, FANE spokesperson Gilles LeBlanc emphasized the fact that many of the province's small and medium sized fish processing plants were owned and operated by the Acadians of Southwest

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[12] Cyrille LeBlanc, "Editorial: Le Petit Courrier deviant provincial," *Le Courrier*, May 25, 1972, 1.
[13] "Commission MacDonald sur l'économie: Absence des pêcheries," *Le Droit,* October 14, 1983. The MacDonald Commission is formally known as the "Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada."
[14] "Commission MacDonald sur l'économie: Absence des pêcheries," *Le Droit*, October 14, 1983.

Nova Scotia.[15] LeBlanc encouraged the federal government to avoid investing in large fishing companies that could displace the localized Acadian market of the Southwest Shore, reminding the audience that the government ultimately decides fishing regulations and catch quotas.[16]

Throughout the Acadian neo-nationalist period, the "institutional interconnectivity" of the FANE, *Le Courrier*, and the Acadian fishing effort also extended to encompass the Université Sainte-Anne. For example, a group of administrators from the university began lobbying for the creation of a fisheries education program in Southwest Nova Scotia during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The project was first brought to the attention of provincial Fisheries Minister Dr. Don Reid on February 2, 1977, by Father Léger Comeau, the head of Sainte-Anne's continuing studies department.[17] Speaking before Reid and other members of the House of Assembly, Comeau argued that the provincial Fisheries Ministry ought to join forces with Sainte-Anne in offering a series of specialized training courses for local fisheries workers and possibly even establish "une école dans le sens large du mot."[18] To support the project, the university requested that the province supply an operational budget of approximately $100,000 for the first year, as well as assist in the hiring of half a dozen coordinators and facilitators. In addition to calling for the creation of localized, francophone training courses "qui se rapportent directement à la pêche," university administrators also expressed their desire to run a supplemental course series targeted at the broader Acadian community of the Southwest Shore "qui se rapportent au pêcheur comme membre d'une communauté."[19] In response to the request, the Fisheries Minister suggested instead that the Fisheries School in Pictou send facilitators to the Southwest region to offer their existent course curriculum. However, Comeau was not entirely on board with this suggestion, arguing that local representatives such as Arnold Muise

[15] "Commission MacDonald sur l'économie: Absence des pêcheries," *Le Droit*, October 14, 1983.
[16] Commission MacDonald sur l'économie: Absence des pêcheries," *Le Droit*, October 14, 1983.
[17] "Une réponse bientôt: une école des travailleurs de la mer," *Le Courrier*, February 2, 1977, 1-2.
[18] "Une réponse bientôt: une école des travailleurs de la mer," *Le Courrier*, February 2, 1977, 1-2.
[19] Cyrille LeBlanc, "Éditorial: L'école des travailleurs de la mer," *Le Courrier*, March 31, 1977, 4.

from West Pubnico would be a more suitable choice than imported "experts."[20] The Minister also argued that federal and provincial representatives were able to undertake the planned community service side of the project, emphasizing the fact that fisher *education* was the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Colleges, and Schools, while his ministry was only responsible for the *training* of strictly commercial fishers.[21] Lastly, as expected, the minister said the program was too expensive.

Regardless of the university's failure to secure funding for a provincially run fisheries school, they still managed to hold a number of outreach activities and workshops for Acadian fishers and other members of the community. For example, Sainte-Anne partnered with the FANE in March 1977 to stage the "Journée d'Information pour les Acadiens d'Argyle, Yarmouth et Clare," designed to connect the Southwest region's francophone residents.[22] The event was highly catered to the local fisher population, including lectures such as "Les pêcheurs et l'économie," "Petites entreprises," "Les pêcheurs et la loi," and "Rôle et responsabilité du pêcheur dans sa communauté."[23] The coordinator of Sainte-Anne's continuing education program, Peter Boudreau, also held additional information sessions for fishers and fish plant owners on unemployment insurance and income tax declarations throughout the late 1970s. These sorts of meetings usually took place in large fishing communities, such as Meteghan, Saulnierville, Wedgeport, West Pubnico, and Surette's Island.[24] Boudreau's initiative was applauded by Delbert Doucet, a local resident who worked with the federal unemployment insurance office, telling a journalist for *Le Courrier* in 1977: "l'approche informel des séminaires vers le public et la simplification des règlements et de l'atmosphère présentés aux

[20] LeBlanc, "L'école des travailleurs de la mer," 4.
[21] "Une école pour les pêcheurs: La province refuse le collège," *Le Courrier*, March 24, 1977, 1-2.
[22] "La journée d'information fut un succès: d'autres journées d'information sont nécessaires," *Le Courrier*, March 16, 1977, 1-2.
[23] See the event poster on page twelve of *Le Courrier*, February 24, 1977.
[24] "Séminaires d'information pour les pêcheurs - un grand succès," *Le Courrier*, March 3, 1977, 9.

pêcheurs donnait l'occasion à ceux-ci de poser des questions qu'ils n'auraient pas posées autrement."[25]

Within the context of Southwest Nova Scotia's Acadian fishing communities, the attention afforded to the fishing industry's dynamics by prominent Acadian institutions illustrates how the local economic contexts of the "fishers" were influencing the social and political contexts of the "Acadians." The economic embeddedness of the commercial fishing industry within Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia produced institutional embeddedness and interconnectedness, ultimately shaping the orientation and advancement of larger social and cultural projects during the neo-nationalist period. As such, the social identity of "fisher" evidently served as a value-added resource to that of "Acadian" during the period of study, allowing for local residents to create new, regionally specific assertions of Acadianité.

Celebrating Regional Acadianité: The Commercial Fisheries, Community, and Culture

While the previous section highlighted the importance assigned to the Acadian fishing effort by local institutions, this section emphasizes the role of the industry in delineating the cultural eclecticism of the Southwest Shore as well as regional expressions of Acadianité. It explores how the Acadians of Southwest Nova Scotia selectively drew upon popular neo-nationalist discourse, traditional or authenticated elements of Acadian culture, and the region's local, commonsensical culture to operationalize new symbolic representations of Acadianité during the neo-nationalist period. Specifically, it discusses how the embeddedness of the fisheries served as a societal resource for the consolidation of Acadian identity on a local level, as well as its transmission into global economic and cultural networks.

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[25] "Séminaires d'information pour les pêcheurs - un grand succès," *Le Courrier*, March 3, 1977, 9.

The idea that the fisheries were a space where tradition could be preserved, and modernity could be practiced remained true within the Acadian communities of Southwest Nova Scotia well into the 1980s. For example, the popular Acadian folktales, legends, and anecdotes of Clare and Argyle were often intimately tied to the region's fishing effort. However, during the late twentieth century, the punchline of Clare and Argyle's most popular maritime stories and anecdotes became increasingly associated with the Acadian fishers' struggle to adapt to modernity. For example, a well-known story from 1970s West Pubnico recounts the frustration of an elderly fisherman attempting to dock his first motorized vessel. After several meticulously failed attempts - and in front of a large, highly amused audience - the fisher resorted to slamming his foot on the vessel's gas pedal, ramming it directly into the side of the West Pubnico wharf in an act of aggravated annoyance.[26] Another coeval story from Meteghan tells the tale of an Acadian fisherman who bought his first battery powered two way radio, but decided to return it after only one use. After a long day at sea, and knowing nothing about broadcasting, the fisherman supposedly stormed into the shop where he had purchased the "English" radio, and insisted they sell him a "French" model instead.[27] These sorts of stories are important to mention, as they pose localized, relatable, and pragmatic personal experiences as an Acadian cultural identifier in Southwest Nova Scotia. They demonstrate how maritime vocabulary and humour intersected with the struggle to adopt to modernity during the Acadian neo-nationalist period and illustrate how the Acadian fishing effort was embed with a great deal of intangible cultural heritage.

Of the same token, the strong associations between fishing, religion, and Acadianité in Southwest Nova Scotia during the late twentieth century is another topic warranting further discussion. As outlined in Chapter 1, the Roman Catholic Church played a determining role in the

[26] Carmen D'Entremont, "Contes, légendes, blagues, anecdotes et mystifications : la tradition orale de Pubnico," *Revue de l'Université de Moncton* 47, no. 2 (2016): 156.
[27] D'Entremont, "La tradition orale de Pubnico," 147.

social structure of Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia, particularly during the decades preceding the First World War. In addition to exercising a great deal of influence over everyday affairs, the Catholic Church and its intermediary bodies served as the sole site of institutionalized Acadian power in the region. However, during the 1960s and 1970s, the power and influence of the Catholic Church in Southwest Nova Scotia began to rapidly decrease. It was at this time that the state assumed greater responsibility for local education and welfare systems, while simultaneously, the FANE emerged as the region's key advocate for the preservation of Acadian culture, language, and tradition. Although the period was marked by an overt rejection of religious sentimentalism among Acadian neo-nationalists, Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia was far from experiencing its great moment of secularization. In fact, Catholicism remained particularly prevalent in the Acadian fishing communities of Clare and Argyle well into the second half of the twentieth century. A staggering 88% of respondents from West Pubnico, SAR, and Wedgeport listed their religious denomination as Roman Catholic in the 1981 Canadian Census, as did 85% of respondents from Meteghan, Church Point, and Saulnierville.[28] While these numbers are not quite as high as they were a century prior, they do provide insight into *why* certain social structures, cultural mentalities, and forms of social regulation associated with Acadian Catholicism survived in Clare and Argyle. The *how* of this phenomenon, however, lies within the realm of meaning.

Across the Acadian fishing communities of Southwest Nova Scotia, there exists a longstanding and uniquely spiritual set of rituals, folkloric tales, and values systems that are endemic to the Acadian fisher identity and experience. The importance of hard work, the duty to steward one's natural environment, and veneration of preternatural forces all align with the Catholic faith and are reflected in the Acadian's approach to fishing as a way of life in Southwest Nova Scotia. Contemporary photographs of the region's Acadian fishing vessels provide insight into the

[28] Data obtained through the Canadian Census Analyzer, Canadian Census, 1981.

prevalence of and reverence for religious iconography among the Acadian fishers, capturing how crucifixes, crosses, and images of saints were often affixed to fishing vessels as a sign of good luck.[29] Although this tradition was hardly unique to the Acadian fishers, the prevalence of spiritual celebrations venerating the regional fishing effort further illustrate the deep connection between fishing and religion in late twentieth century Clare and Argyle. Fishermen's masses were commonly held in late November or early December, coinciding with the opening of the lobster fishing season. Although it can be assumed that these sorts of gatherings were held in several of the region's Acadian fishing communities, their occurrence was best documented in Saulnierville, Meteghan, and Wedgeport.[30] These gatherings often coincided with the Feast of the King, a Catholic holiday instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1925.[31] The Feast of the King was originally contrived by the Catholic church in response to the growth of secularism and state intervention during the early twentieth century, serving as a reminder to parishioners that the sovereignty and authority of Christ transcends all earthly powers.[32] Considering the vilifying attitude expressed towards secularism by religious leaders in Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia during the early twentieth century, as well as the connection between fishing and the resistance of state hegemony, the concurrence of the two celebrations is both understandable and noteworthy.

Of the same token, the popular folklore and superstitions of Southwest Nova Scotia's Acadian fishers also evoked the Catholic faith. During the 1970s and 1980s, religious rituals and social gatherings associated with the fisheries remained commonplace in the Acadian fishing communities of Southwest Nova Scotia. The most well-known example is decidedly "la bénédiction de la flotte" or the blessing of the fleet, a religious ceremony designed to invoke divine protection

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[29] For example, see "La bénédiction de la flotte," *Le Courrier*, June 5, 1975, 15.
[30] See "Messe des Pêcheurs," *Le Courrier*, December 4, 1975, 22; and "Célébration pour une bonne pêche," *Le Courrier*, November 27, 1975, 12.
[31] Deveau, *Clare ou la ville française*, 65.
[32] Deveau, *Clare ou la ville française*, 67.

for fishing vessels and crews. Despite the fact that the tradition was first introduced to Clare and Argyle during the 1930s, its core elements remained virtually unchanged well into the 1980s. The tradition was even adopted by nearby Protestant fishing communities during the 1970s, although the ceremonies held in Clare and Argyle's Acadian fishing communities often gathered the largest crowds.[33] At the opening of each fishing season, clergy members, fishers, and local residents gathered along the wooden wharves of Meteghan, Saulnierville, West Pubnico, and Wedgeport to collectively pray for a safe and bountiful catch. After sermons had been delivered and moments of prayer had passed, priests ceremoniously sprinkled holy water across the fishing boats and their crews, the former of which were usually decorated with flags, banners, and religious symbols. Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, the annual blessing of the fleet was a highly attended event in Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia. In fact, between 1968 and 1976, ceremonies held at the wharf in Meteghan regularly attracted upwards of 1,500 spectators.[34] The ritual was even broadcast on the Canadian television show "Fishermen's Log" in 1966, which featured panoramic shots of approximately four dozen fishing vessels gathered at the mouth of Meteghan Harbour and a devoted crowd of nearly five thousand local residents surrounding them.[35]

During the mid 1970s, several additions were made to the ceremony's traditional agenda and guestlist. Federal fisheries ministers, elected officials, and Acadian cultural leaders became guests of honor at the annual blessing of the fleet, sometimes delivering speeches longer than the sermon of the priest. The local couple selected as "Gabriel and Evangeline" during the previous year's Acadian festival now posed onstage next to clergy members, while fisheries ministers listed income and

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[33] Deveau, *La Ville Française,* 72.
[34] See "Bénédiction de la flotte à Meteghan," *Le Courrier*, June 13, 1968, 3; "Bénédiction de la flotte," *Le Courrier*, June 19, 1969; "Belle cérémonie à Meteghan, Bénédiction de la flotte," *Le Courrier*, June 17, 1971, 1; "Une grande participation à la bénédiction malgré le ciel couvert," *Le Courrier*, June 10, 1976, 3.
[35] "La cérémonie de bénédiction vue à la télévision," *Le Courrier*, June 16, 1966, 1.

tonnage statistics into thick black microphones.[36] By 1975, the blessing of the fleet even featured a six-cylinder fishing boat race and a lobster trap hauling competition, both of which afforded a handsome trophy to their winners.[37] The evolution and continuity of the blessing of the fleet ceremony in Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia provides an interesting glimpse into how the embeddedness of the fisheries as an economic structure modifies the social and cultural structures that surround it. For one, there is something to be said about the high degree of community involvement in the blessing of the fleet. Despite the fact that more residents of Clare and Argyle identified as Acadian than as Catholic during the 1970s and 1980s, community attendance at the blessing of the fleet sometimes surpassed that of the Festival Acadien de Clare. Evidently, while the ceremony was at its core a religious tradition, it also had a certain social and cultural importance to the broader Acadian community. Beyond simply responding to the spiritual and superstitious beliefs of Acadian fishers, the blessing of the fleet also recognized the dangerous nature of the work and evoked several tenets of Acadian cultural identity, including solidarity, mutual support, and self-sufficiency — all of which survived the cultural iconoclasm of the neo-nationalist period. The high level of community attendance at the annual event also speaks to the shared belief that fisher success and safety was crucial to the overall wellbeing of Acadian society in Southwest Nova Scotia, as nearly all of its economic structures were tied to the fisheries. What was an event once grounded in the region's local, commonsensical culture soon became one fused with their traditional, authenticated culture. Collectively, this chapter has demonstrated how all of the economic activities related to the fisheries in Clare and Argyle's Acadian fishing communities were intricately tied to the region's social and cultural fabric. Both a point of tension and strength, the ways in which the

[36] One noteworthy speech delivered at the blessing of the fleet was by provincial Fisheries Minister John Buchanan in 1970 – See "Bénédiction de la flotte," *Le Courrier*, June 11, 1970, 1. Another notable example was delivered by Benoit Comeau in 1974, see G.J. Martin, "La bénédiction de la flotte," *Le Courrier*, June 20, 1974, 2.
[37]"La bénédiction de la flotte," *Le Courrier*, June 5, 1975, 15.

Southwest region's specific brand of Acadianité was negotiated locally, contested provincially, and eventually transmitted globally epitomized the Acadian population's desire to assert their authenticity and specificity.

Conclusion

Collectively, this thesis has demonstrated how the neo-nationalist movement served as a source of rupture and the fisheries as a source of stability for the Acadian way of life in Southwest Nova Scotia during the latter half of the twentieth century. Exploring the associative networks between the conditions of the Acadian fishers' work and the overall social and cultural structure of their communities has revealed how fisheries work became invested with commodified cultural meaning during the late twentieth century, a causal process that solicited the embeddedness of the fisheries and selectively drew upon neo-nationalist ideology, rhetoric, and aspiration. This negotiation process exemplifies the foresight, subjectivity, and agency of the Acadians of Southwest Nova Scotia during the late twentieth century, contradicting their contemporary detraction by neo-nationalists and modern pretermission by Acadian historians. By way of leveraging their dual subject-positioning as "Acadians" and "fishers" the Acadians of Southwest Nova Scotia were able to better confront the complex social, cultural, and economic challenges with which they were posed as rural, francophone minorities. Notably, this process unfolded across several scales, dependent upon the actions of individual fishers, fishers associations, Acadian fish producers and processors, and local Acadian institutions. Activities such as campaigning for improved fisher education, lobbying for linguistics rights among fishers, and internally expanding the commercial side of the Acadian fishing industry (i.e., the acquisitions made by Comeau Sea Foods Ltd.) afforded the Acadians of Clare and Argyle new opportunities for social mobility, a key goal of the neo-nationalist movement.

Although the region's Acadian population began to rapidly decline during the mid 1980s and the prosperity of the local fishery waned, this thesis has demonstrated how the late 1960s through to the early 1980s was a unique paradigm of cultural and economic opportunity in Acadian Southwest Nova Scotia, coinciding with the rise of the Acadian neo-nationalist movement.

In doing so, this study has greatly contributed to the field of Acadian economic, social, and cultural history, as well as the study of community embeddedness in the Atlantic fisheries more broadly; demonstrating how economic and spatial structures are implicated in the production and reproduction of localized Acadianité. This thesis has also provided the opportunity for future explorations on how the cultural importance of the Acadian fishing effort influenced the political efficacy of Clare and Argyle's Acadian residents during the 1990s, when Mi'kmaq moderate livelihood fisheries access in Nova Scotia became an issue of key political importance. Although a necessary addition to the existent historiographical archive, there is still much work to be done in the field of Acadian economic history, especially that of Southwest Nova Scotia.

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